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Narrative Construction of Leadership

Four Realms of Leadership in the Essays of Adult Students



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ABSTRACT

This study belongs to the field of leadership research and is focused on relational leadership. Relational leadership research is in its early stages and needs more attention. This study departs mainly from leadership research orientating in leader-centricity and its effectiveness. Relational leadership highlights the notion of leadership as a process, its ongoing nature and the importance of local-historical context. It also introduces the concept of “space between,” the moment where the leadership process is constructed in interaction.

This research emphasises the social construction and relational nature of leadership. The study is qualitative and inductive by nature, using narrative methodology in order to make sense, communicate, and construct the leadership phenomenon. The focus of this research is in reconstructing leadership using written essays of adult higher education students.

This study contributes in the field of relational leadership processes illustrating four reconstructions of leadership in the form of narratives. The four realities, coined here as realms of leadership, are: Excellence, Balance, Quasi, and Anarchy. They are reconstructions of leadership moments of different kind. This study also contrasts the realms by four core constructs: Professionalism, Behaviour, Development, and Expression. These invisible core constructs fulfil the relational interaction of leadership phenomena. Further, this study argues that the discourse of readjusting in the space between realms is an invisible thread linking the processes together. Leadership constructs in this study of four realms between which readjusting works as an invisible bridge. The contribution of this study belongs to the field of relational leadership exploring and constructing the space between in leadership.

By legitimating leadership as a relational process instead of describing it as an individual-based issue, this research and its idea of multiple realities invites the audience to dialogue and discussion.

Keywords: leadership, narrative, relational processes, space between

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PROLOGUE



Figure 1: Leadership and its “sides”.

**“From the valley big things are seen -
from the peak only small”**

-Kirsi Neuvonen 2006-
(quotation from her painting)

“What leadership is has been an enigma of social democracy since the classical philosopher-kings of Plato” (Grint, 1977, in Wood, 2005, p.3).

Leadership means a lot to me. Leadership has always been “my thing”. Ever since I was a little girl, I can remember thinking of leadership issues. I don’t know why. During my life leadership has shown its many *sides* to me. I have worked in a leading role for over ten years. I have been led, of course, at work and certainly in many other occasions. I have studied leadership issues and now I have done scientific research on the phenomenon. The path of my research came across in my everyday as a teacher.

Being a leadership teacher and reading hundreds of essays by adult students on leadership, concerning everyday work life in hundreds of different organisations, I have always had the strange feeling that there is “something” in these essays. I just could not say exactly what but my intuition told there was a “message.” Every year I looked forward to have those “jewels” in my hand. Reading the essays was like sitting in an exciting, emotionally loaded theatre play. One moment I was smiling and talking to myself like “yes,” “wow,” the next moment I was cursing and flaring up, and at some point I was in tears. Sometimes I even found myself applauding.

I often have had to assure my students that writing to me is absolutely confidential and I was the only one handling the essays. It seemed to me that writing about leadership issues is a very sensitive matter to adult students. Some even wrote as an endnote that writing so openly about leadership experiences is a totally new experience. I very often got the feeling of reading something very secret and unique, which should not end up in “wrong” hands. That made the phenomenon even more mysterious and interesting to me.

I also got a feeling that coffee tables and leadership phenomena belong obviously together. The everyday leadership “happenings” are shared, discussed, and judged in those tables between colleagues. This so called “unofficial” leadership discourse is active, alive, and rich in its opinions. It is blooming. But on the other hand, leadership phenomena seems to be the most feared and sensitive topic to discuss “officially” in organisations, i.e. between leaders and followers. It is not a custom in our everyday.

Through the essays I was somehow “hooked” by this concept of leadership. I was also very pleased reading Bradbury’s and Lichtenstein’s claim that personal interest on the topic is more a richness than a flaw in doing research.

“In essence, relationality argues that a topic’s felt meaningfulness to the researcher is a value to be enacted rather than a problem to be overcome in one’s research design” (Bradbury & al. 2000, p.560).

Another meaningful moment in my research was the possibility of visualising leadership by photographs. Talking with Professor Teppo Sintonen and

reading his article on the theme convinced me to use them. Visualisation is not a novel manner in science. Sintonen and Auvinen write: “*They are an aid to the understanding of complex, massive numerical representations of results or scientific concepts*” (Sintonen & Auvinen, 2011, p.188). Especially when focusing on leadership as a group of relational processes, visualising the phenomena helped me understand it. The pictures are all taken by me and my family. They helped me and I wish they open up the theme to the readers of this dissertation as well.

From these standpoints I opened the door to the world of scientific research. This research has not had a straightforward path. It has had its by-paths and quiet moments, but it never lost its grip on me since I made my decision. It was my companion from the first moment till the last full stop.

1.

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Standpoint

This study belongs to the field of leadership research and is focused on relational leadership. This research emphasises the social construction and relational nature of leadership. It departs mainly from leadership research orientating in leader-centricity and its effectiveness. The focus of this research is in reconstructing leadership using written essays of adult students in higher education. This research is qualitative by nature, using narrative methodology in order to make sense, communicate, and construct the leadership phenomenon (Merriam, 2002).

It is said that leadership research lives exciting and interesting times in the 21st century. Alongside the predominant functionalistic, positivistic, and quantitative studies, new interpretative, socially constructed, and qualitative studies are gaining ground in the research scene (Bryman & Lichtenstein, 2011). Many changes or, rather, expansions of leadership research are largely explained in the literature by increasingly complex and turbulent changes in business environments. Business has become uncertain and extremely dynamic at the same time. Multiple cultural forces and value systems affect organisations in real time. New technologies have reached organisations with an enormous speed. Change has become the norm. This all has put the whole leadership phenomena under “reconstruction” (Küpers & al., 2008; Hamel, 2007; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012). Different and multifold discussions are needed to explain leadership, which has been announced a critical organisational success factor (Bryman & al., 2011).

The long running research stream of leader-centric leadership research has dominated research over many decades since the beginning of scientific leadership research at the end of the 19th century. Leadership has been largely understood to equal an individual leader, having the essential, measurable, and identifiable qualities and capabilities to develop (Ladkin, 2010; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Wood, 2005). The research focus of this entity perspective has been in the effectiveness of leadership heading to idealistic theories and settings in practicing leadership (Hosking, 1995). This research stream has been rich in number and widespread and well rooted in our thinking (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000). It has been created for the industrial era, the modern paradigm, where objectivity, stability, and hierarchical order have dominated thinking. It has not been created for the postmodern paradigm which relies on “(...) *the climate of complexity, interdependence, and indetermination (...)*” (Wood, 2005, p.4) instead.

Towards the millennium, a so called “relational turn” has taken place in leadership research. Relational leadership is built on the idea of relational existence: leadership is understood as a social process, not an individual act. Leadership can be seen and understood as an invisible, complex phenomenon existing in social relations (Hosking, 2006; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Ladkin, 2010). “*Leadership occurs when people construct it be occurring.*” (Ladkin, 2010, p.101) This refers to the idea that the self and the other are not separate (Uhl-Bien & al., 2012; Wood, 2005). The focus is in the nexus of relations, “*viewing the invisible threads that connect actors engaged in leadership processes and relationships as part of the reality (...)*” (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012, p. xx). This invisible middle, the space between, forms the mystery of relational leadership research (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000).

In relational leadership three factors are emphasised: leadership as a process, leadership as an ongoing activity, and leadership as a highly context-dependent phenomenon (Hosking, 2007; 2011; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Leadership as a process departs from the leadership orientation highlighting the individual standpoint. Its standpoint are processes and “*it views persons, leadership and other relational realities as made in processes*” (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 655). Leadership that pays attention to leadership as a process has no beginnings and no ends. In relational leadership processes, the ongoing nature of leadership is an important factor (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Hosking, 1995). Another factor highlights and underlines the context of understanding the phenomenon (Wood, 2005). The relational approach can be traced back to process philosophy Bergson and Whitehead outlined in the early 20th century. They manifested leadership as “*a continual state of flux, as a continuous flow of becoming (...)*” (Bergson & Whithead in Wood, 2005, p.5). The focus is on the relational processes producing and enabling leadership, not on the effectiveness of leadership (Dachler & al., 1995; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Relational leadership is a novel and challenging thinking space, a true discovery for understanding leadership.

Uhl-Bien (2006) presents a relational leadership theory, or as she puts it, an orientation. In this orientation two perspectives of the relational approach are

presented; an entity perspective and a relational perspective. Entity perspective, the more traditional orientation, considers relations from an individualistic standpoint. Individuals are the “makers” of the leadership process. It assumes individuals are “knowing minds” possessing knowledge. On the other hand, the relational orientation sets the process in the focal point and claims, among other things, that persons and leadership are “made” in processes. The epistemology of the relational approach differs from the entity perspective. Instead of viewing knowledge as “mind-stuff,” it views knowledge as socially constructed and socially distributed in local historical contexts. Knowing is an ongoing process of relating. These two perspectives can be complementary, but their implications for study and practice are different (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Hosking, 2006; Ladkin, 2010; Wood, 2005). *“That which is understood as real is differently constructed in different relational and historical/cultural settings”* (Dachler & Hosking, 1995, p.3). In the latest publications a so-called ‘paradigm interplay,’ as here described, has been brought up and highlighted (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012; Romani & al. 2011).

The relational perspective towards leadership is challenging and still open for many interpretations. It needs a lot of discussion and reflection as well as empirical research. Uhl-Bien and Ospina encourage researches by saying that *“the challenge is taken-up”* and *“time is ripe to face them head-on”* (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012, p. xxi). The contemporary pioneers of relational leadership perspective, i.e. Hosking, Uhl-Bien, Ladkin to name a few, have mainly concentrated on explaining and reflecting the perspective itself on a theoretical level. Their work is distinguishable and eye opening. What is needed, however, is more empirical research. An enormous amount of multidisciplinary leadership research has been done understanding leadership equal to a leader. A much smaller amount of research has been undertaken through the relational perspective (see Chapter 3.3.). Through the relational perspective, leadership researchers are waking up to a whole new world, asking questions about the relational leadership processes. Instead of asking “what is leadership,” the question is “how leadership emerges.” The former question assumes that there is an objective truth to be found. The latter ignores the whole idea of external objective truths and opens up multiple local-relational realities (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Ladkin, 2010; Hosking 2006). This research takes part in the discussion on relational leadership. The latest publication from Uhl-Bien and Ospina on the theme is titled *“Advancing Relational Leadership Research”* (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012) *That title serves as a vision and ultimate purpose of this research.*

Choosing relational leadership as a basis for research evokes the question of how to tackle the field. There are no “ready-made” and proven patterns or paths. The starting point for this research lies in the written essay material regarding leadership experienced in the 21st century by adult students. The essays form the most valuable basis for this research. Firstly, using or even finding written empirical material as a source for leadership research is somewhat rare. The vast majority of research is based on interviews (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000). Secondly, their value lies in their “authenticity.” In other words, they were not especially written for research purposes. They were written to me as a leadership teacher knowing that nobody else reads them.

The delicacy of the essays is tangible. They have inspired me in narrating the processes of leadership from the follower context. In the relational perspective, research is seen more as a process of (re)constructing realities and relations. The objects of research are the very processes themselves (Hosking, 2011). The narratives, here coined as realms, reconstruct the reality of leadership experienced in the essays. Their purpose is to serve intelligibility and give insight into the complex phenomena.

In scientific research tradition, the core and the key to riddling a mystery are the theoretical frame of the research question, the methodology and philosophical settings of understanding the prevailing “laws” of ontology and epistemology. They form the core of research.

1.2. The core of the research

“When viewed from a relational standpoint, inquiry does not discover ‘what is’ in order to provide the basis for some subsequent (‘evidence based’) intervention but rather offer a view of inquiry as a process of (re)constructing realities and relations” (Pearce, in Hosking, 2011, p.464).

This research intends to challenge the leader-oriented perspective of leadership research pointing to the centrality of leaders and their ideal qualifications and behaviour and to join the discussion of leadership research in which the processes of leadership become the key element (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Wood, 2005; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003b). This research aims to consolidate and enrich the understanding of leadership as a social and relational process. The edge and context for this discussion comes from the follower context. This research positions itself in the field of leadership research but also peeks at the side of organisational research when discussing and enlightening the follower path and context.

When researching these areas, natural linkages arose and led the research towards organisational research. On the other hand, leadership research is in some writings seen as an “*interdisciplinary scholarship*” (Preface, Sage Handbook, 2011, p.ix). This research turns “the leadership cube” having different sides in a way that the follower side is in the front, i.e. the focus is on the follower context. Up until rather recently, leadership research has focused on leaders and their perceptions of leadership. In this research leadership is viewed and interpreted from the follower context. The starting point and presumption is that from a different angle (from the follower context) and from the relational and narrative approaches, relational leadership research can be enriched and new topics opened.

The angle is not the only important issue. In scientific research, especially when researching complex phenomena such as leadership, methodology plays a central role. One of the first discoveries a leadership researcher does is that the focus of leadership research has been in quantitative research methods.

The notion is rooted in the odd and inexplicable disappearing of qualitative methodologies for a decade (Koskinen & al. 2005). Whereas quantitative methodology deals with the explanation, testing of hypothesis, and statistical analysis, qualitative methodology aims to interpret and understand. As I have noticed several times during this research, paradigmatic changes affect many fields of research. The “comeback” of qualitative research in leadership research was partly due to the change from a positivist-objectivist mindset to a constructionist-subjectivist mindset (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Koskinen & al., 2005; Silverman, 2000). This research follows the qualitative path interpreting and understanding the phenomenon and aims to bring out insights that have not been discussed earlier. The choice strongly depended on the data.

“In order to perform a credible qualitative study, you as a researcher need to construct the setting in your writing and help the readers to enter this setting where the data once lived” (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p.280).

In order to enter the setting where the data once lived, this research uses a narrative approach. The narrative approach serves as a methodology, as a tool to interpret data. The reason and origins for this research were the rich, live data: the adult student’s essays on leadership. Reconstructing the adult student narratives in four categories, this study intends to offer a visible and communicative picture of the social processes of leadership for the reader. The research is a local reconstruction of leadership discussed in the relational leadership arena where leadership is understood as a process.

In qualitative research, focus is in the formulation of the research question. The research question is supposed to work like a drilling machine to find the core of the research: the social processes of leadership in everyday interaction. Formulating the question has been a dynamic act; questions have “lived” throughout the study and reformulated during the progress of the research as it is the way in qualitative settings. To reach the core the research “drills” by asking

1. How is leadership phenomena constructed in adult student narratives?

The word ‘to construct’ refers to ‘putting substances or parts together’ in order to ‘make or build something’ or ‘to something formulated or built systematically’ (Collins English Dictionary). In other words I intend to ‘unpack’ the construction called leadership. Instead of searching for ideal attributes of leadership, I intend to describe leadership through narrating the phenomenon from a process viewpoint. I follow the ideas of Wood:

“Process studies do not start from the position of leadership as self-identical, existing in itself, pure and simple, but as a permeable condition of mutual relatedness, or uninterrupted change constituted by

the double force of it's being 'in-tension' and 'in-fluence'" (Wood, 2005, p.21)

The research is seen more as a process of (re)constructing realities and relations (Hosking, 2006). To put it simply, this study gives a voice to the leadership processes through the essays.

Through analyses of narratives, the original text-form essay stories are categorised and then enlivened into narratives of four categories; Excellence, Balance, Quasi, and Anarchy. They are coined as realms of leadership. They explicit the relational processes of leadership in the follower context. These four realms, as I call them, are then contrasted and discussed in the analysis phase.

The fundamentals of this research are crystallised in three main categories.

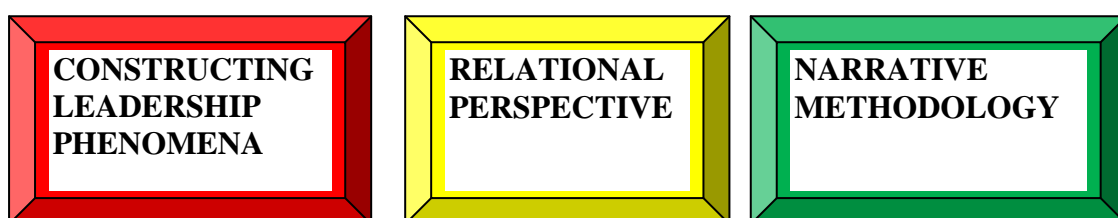


Figure 2: The core of the research

The contribution of this study has firstly to do with legitimating relational leadership. This view has taken its first steps and this research aims to follow the pioneers. In relational leadership the focus is in reconstructing realities. This research contributes to this by constructing four different realities, coined here as the realms of Excellence, Balance, Quasi, and Anarchy. Perhaps the most surprising "finding" of this study deals with the concept of the space between. This research uses core constructs (professionalism, behaviour, development, and expression) to illustrate the space between the realms. The space between the different realms is also presented through the discourse of readjusting in relational leadership. It bridges the realms and organises the ongoingness of leadership processes.

Through these questions and findings, the research pursues an understandable and challenging dialogue regarding relational leadership with all possible participants, not only with researches but also with the research subjects and with others parties interested in taking part in this dialogue (Bradbury & al., 2000). The research sets forth with the research path accompanied by the words of Karl Weick:

"To drop the tools of rationality is to gain access to lightness in the form of intuitions, feelings, stories, improvisation, experience, imagination, active listening, awareness in the moment, novel words, and empathy. All of these non logical activities enable people to solve problems and enact their potential" (Weick, 2007, p.15).

The core of the research is short without its philosophical setting. In the following, the fundamental philosophical thoughts of being in the world, ontology and knowledge creation, as well as the epistemology used and trusted in this research are presented.

1.3. Philosophical settings

In addition to methodological choices, scientific framework deals with the concepts of ontology and epistemology and the paradigm. They are “the aerospace” for the researchers to breath. Ontology concerns the question of existence – what is there in the world? The basic distinction in ontological choices is done between objectivism and subjectivism (often called constructionism). The objectivist understanding of the world assumes that social reality has an independent existence outside the knower whereas the subjective view assumes that social reality is produced through interaction. It may change over time and it may differ subjectively. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

“A focal point of the social constructionist view is that reality does not exist outside individual; ‘reality’ is always about individuals’ and groups’ interpretations” (Blaikie, 1993 in Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p.14).

The second fundamental concept in research, epistemology, defines how knowledge can be produced and argued for. Epistemology deals with questions such as how do we know what we know? What is the relationship between the knower and what is known? (Klenke, 2008). The discussion on objectivity and subjectivity is also relevant as regards epistemology. Objectivistic epistemology assumes that an external world where knowledge is produced exists. Hosking coins this as “dualism” in which the knower and the object are independent and separated things. In subjectivist epistemology, however, knowledge is constructed socially without any “external.” The knower is interacting in the research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Hosking 2006). In subjectivist epistemology the knowledge is only possible through social actors. (Eriksson & Ekovalainen, 2008).

“It is important to recognize that every researcher brings some set of epistemological assumptions into the research process (even if they are not aware of them) and that these assumptions influence how they understand and interpret their data” (Klenke, 2008, p.16).

The worldview, the paradigm that guides the research is social constructionism. The term constructionism was introduced by the researchers Guba and Lincoln when referring to paradigm other than positivist paradigm. According to Guba & Lincoln this philosophy *“is idealist, pluralistic, relativistic, and self-reflective”* (Guba a& Lincoln in Klenke, 2008, p.21). In social constructionism the world is ontologically understood as a socially constructed whole, where social actors produce social reality through social interaction

including the possible change of it. Individual and groups are the reality and it is remolded constantly in interaction (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Social constructionism strongly departs from truth and facts. Instead it underlines the sensitivity of the context. It says that a phenomena can be understood only within its context (Klenke, 2008).

However Hosking presents the concept of *relational constructionism* as one variation of social constructionism. It departs from knowledge as individual's mind stuff. It discusses knowledge as an ongoing process of relating. (Hosking, 1999) Its ontology is best described by Chia's phrasing "ontology of becoming" (Chia, 1995, Hosking & Pluut, 2010).

"(...) the research process can be viewed as a way of "going on" in relation, constructing knowledge, doing things, and socially validating them as e.g., good, relevant, and useful (...)" (Hosking, 1999, p.123).

A central element of constructing social interaction is language (Gergen & al., 1996; Grint, 2005; Bratton & al., 2004, Thatchankary, 1992). Relational constructionism underlines the multiple realities and language based processes. It highlights the language but emphasizes also other ways of relating such as non-verbal gestures, posture, movement, voice etc. (Hosking & Pluut, 2010). This research uses relational constructionist view of reality as a basis. The world is understood as socially constructed in ongoing processes, consisting of multiple realities strongly depending on the current context (Gergen, 1995). The primary goal is to understand and view leadership in the context of followers as represented in the essays, not to produce universal objectivistic truths.

"Phenomena can only be understood within the context within which they are studied: findings from one context cannot be generalized to another; neither problems nor solutions can be generalized from one setting to another" (Guba & Lincoln, 2008 in Klenke, 2008, 21).

As regards my personal positioning as a researcher, I legitimatise myself referring to the arguments in relational constructionism about the researcher naturally being a part of the social construction process. Being a part in everyday leadership processes in working life, I naturally see myself as a part of the research; I exercise and experience leadership every day.

"The different cultures have different ways of knowing – offering different resources and constraints, that none is 'perfect', and that there is no single, sufficient standard by which all could be judged now is widely accepted" (Hosking, 2006, p.28).

In short, this research builds on the social constructionism and its variation relational constructionism. The knowing activates always in ongoing process of relating. Ontology is given *"to relational processes and the local realities they make, break and re-construct"* (Hosking & Pluut, 2010, p.60).

To be able to get the view of this research, the outline of the whole research is now introduced.

1.4. Outline of the research

Chapter 1 gives a brief introduction of the study and its settings and research questions. In this chapter also leadership as a 21st century phenomena is discussed and presented. Leadership as a phenomenon is the core of this research. Also pictures are used to visualise concepts and phenomena. Sometimes pictures are easier to interpret than mere text.

In Chapter 2 followers are put in focus. As this research aims to widen the discussion of leadership in the eyes of followers, I start the chapter by defining a follower and explaining the historical journey followers have made throughout last 200 years. In this chapter I also enlighten followers' position in organisation and leadership research. Followers have been more or less hidden or forgotten in leadership research until the late 20th century.

Chapter 3 is reserved for theoretical discussion. In this research the approach to leadership is made through a relational perceptive using relational leadership theory as a springboard. As the understanding regarding relational leadership and its theory is interestingly under development and lively discussion arenas are born, taking part in it is relevant and important.

Chapter 4 discusses the narrative way of doing research. Narrative knowing is the methodology used, the tool to open up and discuss the research question. This research discusses the narrative approach in terms of terminology and mainstreams. In this chapter the narrative approach in both business research and in my own research is reflected.

Chapter 5 introduces the way the research has been conducted. It starts with the personal research path, which serves, in particular, the trustworthiness of the research. These natural histories serve as an interesting possibility to reflect on the researcher's thinking. The chapter also explains how the data was gathered, organised, and analysed before reconstructed to narratives, coined here as realms of everyday.

In Chapter 6 narratives "talk." This chapter forms the heart of the research and could be described as "the artistic" part of the research. During the research process, four different narratives were created describing leadership in the eyes of the followers. They were named as Excellence, Balance, Quasi, and Anarchy. They highlight the social processes of leadership. The narratives are then contrasted and discussed. The analysis of the narratives continues by looking for core constructs in order to organise the inner space of the realms. The last phase of the analysis concentrates on the space between the realms. This chapter ends up discussing the relational leadership framework.

The final chapter, Chapter 7, concludes and discusses the findings. It discusses the limitations of the study in the spirit of qualitative research. One important part of qualitative research is the discussion of managerial implications also called “practical wisdom.” It deals with the question, how one could use these findings in the everyday. Personally, this down-to-earth reflection represents development in which scientific responsibility is scoped. As every scientific research report, this study sketches outlines for further research.



Figure 3: Research as reflection process

2.

LEADERSHIP IN FOLLOWER CONTEXT

“(...) to know where we are going with leadership research, we must know where we are, and where we have been – we must look backward and forward at the same time” (Hunt & Dodge, 2001, p.453).

Joining the discussion of leadership as a social relational phenomenon, I first evoke some general issues of leadership and enlighten the followers' path to become a part of this leadership phenomenon. It is not a straightforward path. In this chapter the follower frame is described from various angles. First I ask what are followers made of and where are they made in. How has their path developed in different paradigms? I reflect the theme upon three lenses. First I use a historical lens (American history), starting from the end of the 16th century American Federalism, continuing through Industrialism until the present day. The organisational lens reflects the follower position in organisational research context. To complete the task, I move to leadership research using followers as a standpoint.

2.1. Leadership phenomena in general

In our organisations, leadership is probably one the most common discussion themes in coffee tables and street corners of the world. It is easy to to agree with McGregor Burns, who says that *“leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth”* (Burns in Van Vugt, 2006, p.354). Anthropological research suggests that there are no human societies where leadership would not exist in some form. Social psychological research states that leader-follower structure emerges in natural group situations without formal leaders. *“It seems that whenever a group of people come together, a leader-follower relationship naturally develops”* (Van Vugt, 2006, p.354).

This has led various experts to a conclusion where leadership is seen as a part of universal human behaviour (Van Vugt, 2006; Bass, 2008). *“Leadership is a human phenomenon embedded in culture, which includes art, literature, religion, philosophy, language and generally all those things that constitute what it means to live as a human being”* (Ciulla, 2008, p.393). The peculiar nature of leadership has something very basic in its characteristics. Leadership research had therefore gained a lot of multidisciplinary interest and literature is overwhelmed with related articles and books (Watson, 2006; Yukl, 2010). The verbosity is a sign of the complexity of the phenomenon and of the fact that actors of the field are unable to agree on but a few issues, let alone a universally agreed theory. The whole concept is open to hundreds of definitions (Ladkin, 2010; Yukl, 2010; Rost, 1995; Medina, 2011). Its nature is invisible and conceptual, something that can’t be touched but it can be felt. Some theorists even question whether it is useful as a scientific construct at all because of its special characteristics (Yukl, 2010).

“We know it when we see, or, more likely feel it” (Ladkin, 2010, p.viii).

Leadership is similar to phenomena like love, justice, or motherhood. They are hard to define but you are able to recognise them when they exist. What else makes leadership a complex phenomenon? I guess there are no short answers. Watson reflects on the matter, stating that managing an organisation is basically a simple process. It does not mean that it is an easy process. Rather, it is a difficult process which has to do with different kind of relations of multiple interest groups of an organization. *“It is because management involves dealing with a lot of human beings: customers, clients, employees, investors, suppliers, regulators, and so on. The complexity lies in the web of relations...”* (Watson, 1995, p.10). This environmental complexity and the invisible, process-like nature of leadership call for more research around this “slippery” phenomenon (Medina, 2011). We still might not know “all” about leadership. We might have explored only one corner of it.

In this study leadership is explored and rummaged in the follower context. This stems from the strong position of the narrators in my source material. I became extremely interested in how follower issues have become a part of leadership research. Followers have been ignored from mainstream research until the late 20th century and even then the research mainly followed the attributive individual research tradition of leadership research. Mary Parker-Follet’s wise words have convinced me of the importance of the follower context in this research.

“Those led have not merely a passive part, they have not merely to follow and obey, they have to help keep the leader in control of the situation. Let us not think that we are either leader or – nothing of much importance. As one of those led, we have part in leadership” (Parker-Follet, 1941, p.289).

This important anecdote has inspired me to try to understand leadership from different angles and places, from different contexts. In this study I wander in

the mountains of leadership and wonder whether the leadership phenomenon can be opened up through the follower context. Let us first discuss the state of the leadership phenomenon and its research traditions.

As complex and multi-voiced phenomena as leadership shouldn't be submitted to universal definitions. *"Leadership can, perhaps, be everything and nothing"* (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003b, p.375). As a phenomenon leadership is a strongly institutionalised and well-known concept in society. It has been etched into our minds as a positive, desirable, and superior phenomenon "owned" by a leader. It has been labelled responsible for everything in current times (Grint, 2005). An enormous amount of leadership literature effectively supports and maintains the greatness of the leadership phenomenon as something very significant and special – even mystical.

As a leadership teacher, I have also witnessed this superiority in many discussions with students. For many, a leading role is a dream and ultimate goal in working life. A great deal of leadership literature considers leadership as an individual act and an individual role. Leadership equals an individual leader. This "baggage" tends to act as a self-fulfilling notion in our everyday interaction, i.e. we strongly believe in the power of leadership as a leader activity. (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003a; Crevani & al., 2010; Yukl, 2010).

In this study, however, followers play an important role. They serve as a context to which relational leadership heavily leans on. I believe that to be able to understand leadership, a profound discussion of the standpoints of following and followers as parts of leadership research is necessary.

2.2. Follower as a concept

Before using the historical and organisational lenses, the concept 'follower' must be explained.

"Most of us are leaders in some situations and followers in other"
(Chaleff, 2009, p.2).

As a concept, 'follower' is in a symbiotic relation to 'leader.' They are counterparts like teacher and student – the one does not exist without the other. Together they formulate a leadership function – the two parts of a whole (Collinson, 2006; Chaleff, 2009).

The etymological root for the word 'follower' comes from the Old High German *follaziohan* meaning "to assist, to help, to succor and to minister." Likewise, the word 'leader' meant in the Old High German "to suffer, to endure or to undergo." This means that followers originally took care of leaders, helped them in difficult situations. As we know, words alter their meaning over time: the next interpretation for 'follower' was "to go or be full in number." It meant that, for example, when a leader was travelling far, the people in attendance were called followers, which was an honorable position with lot of prestige.

The last hundred years has recycled the word follower to a connotation with less appreciation. According to Kelley the negative connotation refers back to Social Darwinism – to the phrase “survival of the fittest.” The industrial era has charged the connotation of the word to its strong hierarchical meaning: being ranked under a leader. (Kelley, 1992; Jordan, 2009).

An interesting approach is the viewpoint of evolutionary scientists. They state that the leader-follower aspect is a result of the benefits of group coordination during evolution. This means that over time it has been crucial to stay in groups in order to survive when moving from one place to another. Ancient leadership may have been born with the idea of persuading others literally to follow a companion to a new place. This literal interpretation can be seen also in the current misinterpretation of the word. (Van Vugt, 2006)

In many 21st century articles and books concerning followers or followership, authors refer to the negative connotation of the word ‘follower.’ It is said to insult; to suggest too much passivity, to be condescending and so forth. Obviously these connotations refer to the history of the follower status in industrialised work life in the 20th century. The silent and humble obeying status of followers supported by the theoretical standpoint in the beginning of the previous century has seemingly been engraved to the souls of modern people. Its burden is heavy (Chlaeff, 2009; Kellermann, 2008; Mc Crimmon, 2005; Rost, 2008).

Warren Bennis says that “*I will go out on a limb and predict that a decade from now, the terms leader and follower will seem as dated as bell bottoms and Nehru jackets*” (Bennis in Riggio, 2008, p.xxvi). I have nothing against introducing a new expression instead of using the word ‘follower’ as a counterpart to ‘leader.’ But I don’t intend to do it here. There are terms like supporter, collaborator, partner, associate, team-member, employee, worker, subordinate, constituent, and few more describing the same phenomenon. In leadership literature, however, the concept of followers has preserved well. Time will tell if the 21st century leadership practices will open up more room for linguistic development in leadership activities. Despite all critique, the word follower is used in this research to describe the counterpart of a leader.

2.3. Who is follower?

The shortest definition of follower can be understood as them being “other than leaders.” The traditional and formal definitions of follower refer mostly on two terms: ranking and behaviour. The ranking is expressed by the subordinate position of the follower having less power, authority and influence than their leaders. Behaviour refers to going along with someone else’s will, following somebody’s ideas (Kellerman, 2008).

The question who is a follower can also be turned the other way round. In some occasions ranking and behaviour deviate from the traditional view by seeing followers as leaders and leaders as followers and sometimes the roles

are blurred. An example of that was a hospital visit with my child. I perceived the work of a doctor and nurse for thirty minutes thinking that the nurse was the doctor and vice versa. At the end of the care I was amazed to see the doctor, i.e. "the wrong person" sign the prescription. What made me think that the nurse was a doctor and doctor was a nurse? First of all, they wore "normal" clothes, so I could not read the dress code. Secondly, the nurse took the initiative, was very social, and led the process. She asked the questions, she wondered what would be best to do next and so forth. The doctor was quiet and somehow unsure. She was hardly taking part in the care process. She was more or less on the back. Later I found out that the doctor was a substitute. The situation and context made her change the traditional leading role of a doctor to the role of a follower. According to Kellerman the roles can vary depending on situation and context.

"To be a follower in Asia is different from being a follower in South America. To be follower in a small group is different from being a follower in a large organization. To be a follower in a moment of crisis is different from being a follower when the situation is stable. To be a follower who is high on the organizational ladder is different from being a follower who is lower down. To be follower of a leader who is benevolent and benign is different from being a follower of a leader who is mean and malevolent. To be a follower in a large multinational corporation is different from being a follower in a small family business. And to be a follower in the twenty first-first century is different from being a follower in the eleventh" (Kellerman, 2008, p.84).

The modern way to define followers is cooperative. In fact the modern ideas are based on century old ideas of Mary Parker-Follet:

"There is a conception of leadership gaining ground to-day very different from our old notion...It is a conception very far removed from the leader-follower relation. With that conception you had to be either a leader or a leaner. Today our thinking is tending less and less to be confined within the boundaries of those two alternatives. There is the idea of a reciprocal leadership. There is also the idea of a partnership of following, of following the invisible leader – the common purpose. The relation of the rest of the group to the leader is not a passive one" (Parker-Follet in Maroosis, 2008, p.17).

Chaleff upgrades Parker-Follet's ideas by describing followers with the help of a so-called action circle in which followers and leaders have different roles. Followers and leaders are two sides of one process. Together leaders and followers form an action circle around a common purpose. Both roles are simultaneously needed to fulfil the purpose. Leader and follower don't exist without each other and the shared purpose. The follower role is as legitimate and necessary as the leader role (Chaleff, 2009, Parker-Follet, 1941).

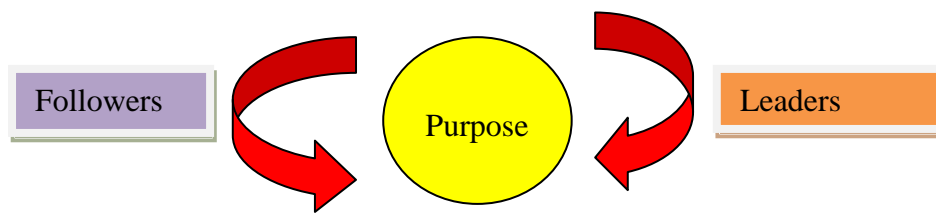


Figure 4: Leaders, followers and common purpose (Chaleff, 2009).

To sum up, both the traditional and modern definitions are needed to understand the leadership phenomenon. The symbiotic nature of the follower–leader axis is emphasised. Both are needed and in both roles leadership is perceived and constructed in social interaction. Today, follower issues are becoming increasingly topical in scientific leadership and followership discussions. Some researchers argue the importance of follower-centric research by saying that there are much more followers in the world than leaders. How come have we only done leader-centric research for so long? (Chaleff, 2009; Collinson, 2006; Meindl, 1995; VanVugt, 2006). In the following the study enters into the historical perspective of the phenomenon by Jacques’ words

“(…) today’s problems are constrained by yesterday’s” (Jacques, 1996, p.ix).

2.4. Followers with time

Understanding or knowing things from the past centuries help us comprehend the present sense of a “good follower.” In this part I make a brief review of the history of “following,” introducing Federalist America as a foundation for change. Its roots lay in increasing hierarchy and regulation in European societies in the 18th century. The counteraction was the dream of the free society including individualism and personal freedom of the yeomen colonising North America. Jacques writes interestingly: *“(…) the American Dream is the silenced portion of 2000 years of Western European history”* (Jacques, 1996, p.31). Follower history is a part of that history. The following part refers mainly to Roy Jacques’ enriching text “Manufacturing the Employee” (1996).

The Federalist individual versus industrialised individual

When talking about today’s followers, employees, or workers (used here as synonyms), we have to pay attention to their history and related development. Today’s follower or, rather, his attitude took shape slowly over the last century, the industrialised era. It didn’t exist as such before the industrialised era of the 20th century. Federalist reality was based on a different common sense.

Federalist reality in America (1790–1870) had its core in local social communities. Until the mid 19th century, 90 % of white male citizens were working for themselves as farmers, merchants, or craftsmen. If somebody had a manufacturing unit, it was small, employing only three to four workers. Work relationships were usually short term. For centuries it had been “common sense” that each piece of work was a new beginning for both sides. The relationships between owner and customer, on the other hand, were often long-term. Work was organised through interactions between self-employed persons. There were very little contacts beyond one’s own community. *“One’s place in the community was an integral part of one’s place in business”* (Jacques, 1996, p.25). People had work relationships with people they had known personally for a long time. Success and wealth were created inside the community.

In the federalist community, a person’s social position was based on one’s “character.” The valued qualities of a person were honest dealings and acceptance of reciprocal responsibility between oneself, business contacts, and the community. Maintaining one’s character meant a comprehensive reflection of one’s action in the community. Financial capabilities were just one part of one’s character.

“The Federalist citizen was the antithesis of the industrial expert. Compared to the industrial subject, the Federalist citizen was highly unified self. An active participant in community self-governance, this citizen preceded the split between the business person and the professional politician” (Jacques, 1996, p.29).

But as we know from history, each reality meets transformations. America’s civil war took place at the very beginning of the industrial revolution towards the end of the 19th century. The war boosted infrastructural changes, such as railroad construction, large factories, and communication infrastructure. In addition, social infrastructure was remodelled. This all broadened the local focus of federalism. At that time army and slaves were seeking a new “master”. Hidden in all this was the beginning for the story of followers. These men from army and slavery were to serve the industrial revolution. Wage workers emerged for the first time as a social group in the society. Until this point in time the society had revolved around the self-employed.

The early years of industrialisation lived the rhythm of agriculture and seasons. Due to this the commitment between followers and employers were partial. It was the advancement of mass production that changed the continuity of work. Massive centralisation of industry bred massive immigration. This centralisation encouraged mechanisms such as group solidarity and collective action.

Industrialism, also called “*disciplinary society*” (Foucault) also brought up new roles within the society which could not be understood in the federalist reality. Whereas federalism operated practically only with the roles of owner and worker, new roles appeared in industrialism. These included managers,

employees, and capitalists which could not be understood in federalist terms. In 1907 Margaret Schaffner talked in her dissertation about a new 'social contract' in the society, describing a shift in a society's 'common sense' regarding the relationship of the individual to the institutions of society (Schaffner in Jacques, 1996). This moment can be seen as a new chapter in the history of workers. At the same time the word 'employee' (French origins: L'employé) was starting to replace federalist terms such as merchant, craftsmen, clerk, and so forth.

In contrast to federalist citizens, an employee had different characteristics. A good worker, an industrial employee serves a master instead of being an independent self-employer. Instead of working short individual tasks, an employee is working permanently for one employer. As a compensation of a long-term commitment for a certain organisation, she/he got a permanent, stable wage. The most remarkable shift in thinking occurred in creating or accepting a subordinate position as part of the nation. An employee was a subordinate, which was mostly contradicting the federalist idea of free citizens.

"For the first time on a large scale, free citizens were grouped in a social structure characterized simultaneously by differences which were ordered horizontally and vertically on a common grid of value specifying both qualitative and quantitative differences regarding one's privilege, responsibility and implicitly, one's value to the institution. In order for the organization of scale to operate, hundreds of thousands of people had to participate in a single plan of action; a system of subordinates and super-ordinates ('superiors') was coalescing" (Jacques 1996, p.73).

Getting one's qualifications categorised and then hierarchised by more knowledgeable managers was part of the industrial order – serving a master. An employee was not born free. An employee was meant to take his/her place in a predefined order. This also led to the extraction of one's thinking and development to the managers and professional experts. If the federalist citizens had a unified role in the society in "politics," business, and home, the new role of the employee was split to different roles.

"A profound remapping of the boundaries of social life has occurred. The business self is split from 'public' sector activities of laws and governance. The 'public' life of the working 'man' (male or female) is split off from 'private' domestic production and family support activities. L'employé the producer is split off from him/herself as consumer" (Jacques, 1996, p.84).

It was industrialism that created a new social role, the role of a manager to better react to the insufficient ways of controlling work efforts. It is noteworthy that the federalist owner role didn't turn straight into the manager role. Instead the role of the employee divided into manager-employee and production-employee roles. The federalist owner role moved towards the role of the financial capitalist due to the larger scale of the businesses and factories. Till

that time the role of the foreman, overseer of the gang, or “boss” as they were called, had been to control the work using physical punishment, income reduction, and arbitrary firing. The new manager’s role was to improve methods to guide employees better.

The differences between working employees and working federalist citizens are illustrated in Table1.

Federalist citizen	Industrialised Employee
Self control of the work process	Serving the master
Short term tasks	Permanent worker
Society based identification	Organisation’s worker
Free citizen	Sub-ordinate position
Product based working	Task oriented working
Outcome based salary	Wage worker
Multiskilled worker	Categorised worker
Self control	Must be managed
One unified role	Role split

Table 1: Differences between employees and federalist citizens (Jaques, 1996)

In the early 20th century business was based in general on “employee” ideology. Generations had been already working in sub-ordinate positions and permanent income was no longer a novel matter. During industrialism main attention had been addressed to functionality and rationalisation of machines and mechanic systems. But the pressure of increasing demand for productivity turned the attention into the human resources and this was the beginning of the scientific management history called “the new industrial revolution.” In the industrial era, the voice and thinking of the follower was silenced. A follower was trampled by the voice of wisdom owned by managerial institution. This was the starting point for scientific organisation theories.

2.5. Followers through organisational theoretic lenses

The path of a follower is here also approached through the lenses of organisation theory. How has a follower been positioned in each theoretical phase? I use historical order in order to complete the follower context and its development in the 20th century. I have applied Peltonen’s (2010) classification of organisational theories. He classifies organisation theories as classical theories, cultural modern theories, rational modern theories, and so-

called “new” organisation theories’ such as symbolic-interpretative theories, critical theories, and post-modern theories. The review starts from the classical organisation theory followed by modern theories and ends with the so-called “new” theories. The intention of this research is to give a brief summary of each theory and clarify, in particular, the development of the follower status.

Early organization theories, i.e. the classical organisation theories, were born to challenge the tradition-based moral ways to organise. Their foundations were in systematic and methodological ways to quantify work and organising instead of using intuition.

2.5.1. Followers in classical organisation theories

The classical organisation theory is influenced by three “big” characters: Fredrik Taylor and Henri Fayol as representatives of the practical branch and Max Weber representing the sociological branch. Their contribution in the follower framework has been fundamental.

Taylor’s ideological breakthrough was to pay attention to individual worker activities and motivation instead of concentrating on machines. The new “common sense,” Taylor’s scientific management, meant first of all dividing managers’ and employees’ work into different categories. Planning (manager work) and doing (employee work) were divided into separate actions. The managers’ duty was first of all to rationalise and quantify employees’ work with scientific methods and controlling it afterwards. In order to reach the optimum in tasks and pace, work was split into small pieces and measured with exact scientific methods. Each task was carefully taught to employees. For employees this marked the end of autonomy in choosing one’s work tasks and the pace of the work which had earlier been decided between employees. Till that time factories were in fact run by the employees and the upper management was only interested in results. Now a good employee, the disciplinary subject, followed and obeyed the exact rules of the management without questioning and own thinking. All actions were strictly controlled and feedback given right away in the name of justness. Taylor’s new methods were combined with a result-based salary – the more you did, the more you earned. The spirit of the age defined managers as the intellectual brain and the employees as “machinery” bodies. (Taylor, 1911)

Fayol also strongly classified the roles of a manager and an employee. He underlined professionalism in manager’s position. Managerial professionalism aimed to confirm the consistency of the organisation. Fayol put his ideas in the form of leadership “theses” (Fayol, 1949, Peltonen, 2010).

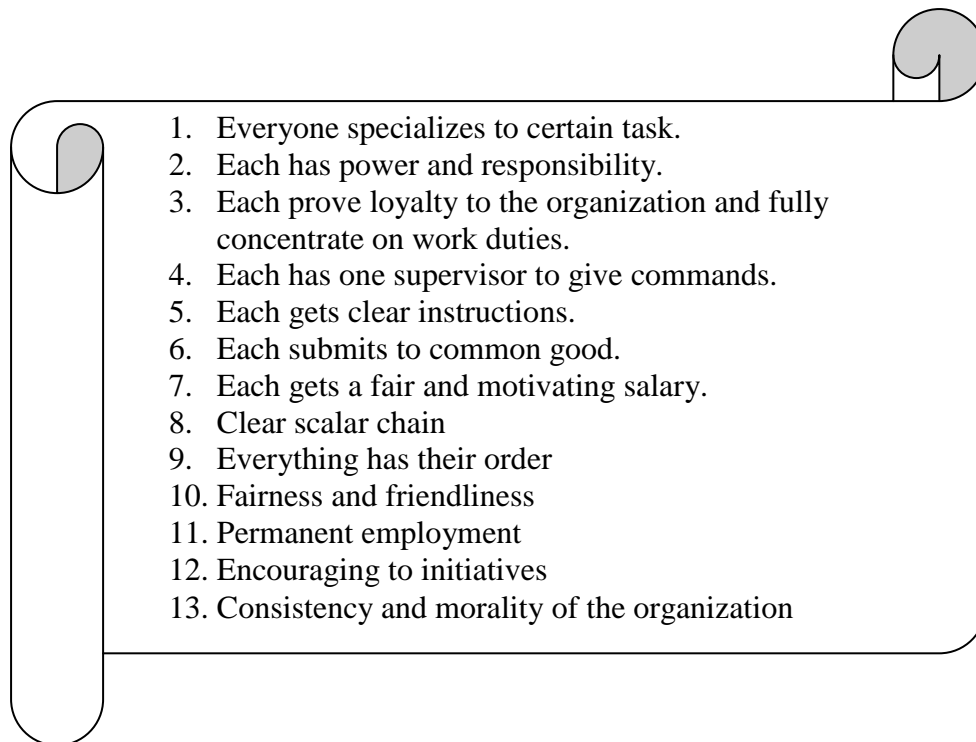


Figure 5: Fayol's theses (Peltonen, 2010)

Max Weber's heritage to individual follower was rational-legal authority which was based on law and norms instead of monarchy or charismatic authority. Its explicit embodiment was the concept of bureaucracy. In bureaucracy, administration and floor work was distanced from each other by organising the gathering of information with objective methods and processes. The organising could be done based on this objective information and face to face contact to "floor" was no longer necessary. Planning and directions happened concretely in bureau behind the desk. From the follower viewpoint bureaucracy also meant clear tasks and clear instructions. Every work situation was instructed or coded by written documents. Recruitment process was based on formal knowledge and all the positions were hierarchically organised, including the decision-making system. Perhaps one of the most radical ideas was to separate between an impersonal, rational work personality and a private personality.

To conclude, in classical theories a follower had to submit to common order and hierarchy. On the other hand, motivational factors and fairness were considered as tools to better productivity. To me the most characteristic and powerful phenomenon of classical theories was the "robbery" of the followers'

own thinking. Its “success” has been far-reaching and its roots are still deep in the 21st century (Jacques, 1996; Peltonen, 2010; Seeck, 2008).

2.5.2. Followers in modern organisation theories

The “classic” way of organising literally broke the social consistency of industrial organisations. Modern organisation theories, the cultural modern and later rational modern theories challenged the absolute rationality-based organisational framework.

Cultural modern theorists (e.g. Mayo, Barnard) paid attention to an organisation’s social frameworks. Alongside the rational organisation, unstructured and unofficial social networks influence work. Things like friendship or natural affinity emerged as guiding, motivational forces when talking about productivity. All in all the human aspect as a part of an organisation’s functionality was taken into account in developing organisations (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Mayo, 1933).

Elton Mayo’s notion about human relations enabled an organic, living approach to finding organisational cohesion. A human being has social and psychological needs which cannot be overlooked in the organisational context. Individuals’ needs, meaningful jobs, autonomy, responsibility, and recognition were the anti-discourse to the mechanistic framework of the previous paradigm. This all meant that structured and unstructured factors were seeking balance in organisations.

Chester Barnard developed human relations theories by defining and conceptualising earlier ideas. He defined organisations as social, cooperative organisms. Success was based on cooperation. On the other hand, he emphasised that organisations depend on their environment. They are not closed systems. Barnard described the symbiotic nature of unstructured and structured organisations. The unstructured part was to balance the deficiencies of a structured organisation. Both are needed in order to reach the optimum. In modern cultural theories, individuals, the followers become focal. The individual relates to the organisational context in two ways: rationally and emotionally. This meant that individuals must be considered as “whole,” as psychological and physical, emotional, and rational human beings. Despite the more human aspect of modern theories, the background ideology consists of the “one” ideal way of organising. (Barnard, 1938; Peltonen 2010; Seeck, 2008).

After the Second World War a more rational approach took root. Organisations were now seen as rational systems. A follower was a part of the system. The modern rational theories, contingency theory (Burns) and decision making theory (Simon and March) directed the attention to optimum reached by systematic and analytic mechanisms. New was the idea of organisation as an open system, meaning that the dynamics of the organisation are dependent on the surrounding environment and its current

contingencies. What did this all mean from the follower perspective? If human relations had opened the door to more creative solutions between managers and followers, the relational approach closed it. The relationship between managers and followers was considered hierarchical. It was admitted that followers form a part of other systems outside the organisation but these elements must be excluded at work. The organisational behaviour in an optimal situation had to be impersonal in order to maintain the dominant order (Peltonen, 2010, Seeck, 2008).

Modern theories held on the idea of seeking the one “truth,” one optimum way to organise and handle individuals as parts of a system. Individuals’ role was to adjust to the functional system. To be able to become a full member of the organisation, a follower had to internalize the norms and values of the organisation.

2.5.3. Followers in “new” organisation theories

In so-called “new” organisation theories, i.e. symbolic-interpretative theories, critical theories, and post-modern theories, the logic of understanding organisations differs essentially from modern theories. They began to settle down in the 1980’s. In symbolic-interpretative theories, ontology is based on subjective understanding of the organisational reality. Organisations are not stable structures. They are constructed over and over again in daily discourses and interpretations. An individual perspective formed now the core of understanding. A fundamental thought was that each follower was allowed to interpret organisation from his/her own standpoint. The meaning of emotions in the construction of reality was considered important. Also language and aesthetics directed the constructed reality. Critical management theory stood and stands for a better future by emancipating everybody to take a critical view on organisational structures and exploiting mechanisms. For followers, the message is to individually and collectively take care of the human potential and the nature (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996). Postmodern theory continues to refer to the unstable nature of organisations. Organising is a flexible process in which individuals interact and shape the phenomenon. Dialogue between managers and followers is seen as a basic tool in decision-making and planning. Everybody is allowed to think and use the full range of their competencies and capabilities. Central theories and researched concepts are knowledge and its role in organisation (Lyotard), knowledge and power and their construction in organisation (Foucault) and deconstruction of authorial texts (Derrida) (Clegg, 1990; Peltonen, 2010).

Perhaps the most interesting and fundamental message of the postmodern ideology is the idea of inseparability of a rational mind and an irrational body and emotions. It means that a human subject acts with both elements when interpreting any situation. As an organisational actor, an individual is encouraged to critically reinforce self-knowledge to be able to struggle and oppose organisational power politics (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Peltonen, 2010).

Concluding the impact of postmodern organisational theories, they invite all organisational actors (followers) to participate and contribute. The leader becomes “valuable” only in relation to other organisational members (followers) and that language and communication form the basis of interaction.

When looking through organisational theoretic lenses during the 20th century, the follower status has moved or is moving from being a silent part of the system towards being an active, critical contributor and partner. To my understanding the question has always been whether or not followers have been able to affect the optimum by their own thinking and action. What about leadership research? Where has follower’s position been and where is it in current research?

2.6. Leadership research and followers

The historical and organisational viewpoints have enlarged the view on leadership as a phenomenon. First of all the history is there whether we like it or not and its impacts are always immanent. The organisational view has supported understanding the development of leadership. The following chapter returns to view the follower frame in the context of leadership research. I introduce the journey followers have made to become a part of the leadership phenomenon and a part of leadership research. The journey of the follower has been long till present relational understanding of leadership. It took more than fifty years of leadership research to realise the importance of followers as a part of the phenomenon. The path has now been discovered and there is no return. I first describe the leader-centric views of leadership starting from trait and behavioural theories and ending up with authentic leadership theory. I then move on to follower-centric leadership research, in which follower traits and behaviour are in the key role. The last part introduces the idea of collective leadership and its focus on collective empowering of organisational members (Pearce & al. 2009).

2.6.1. Leader-centric research

In the first half of the 20th century the mainstream leadership research was leader-centric. Leadership as a phenomenon has been equal to an individual leader. Charisma, behaviour, and styles of the leaders have been the focus and interest of researchers. This meant that effectiveness could be reached concentrating on developing the leaders from an individualistic perspective. It has also meant that as being in the focal point of the discussions leaders had been loaded with enormous expectations of being responsible for organisations’ success as well as failure (Bligh & al., 2011; Ladkin, 2010). Concentrating on traits, behaviour, and styles of the leader underlined the

ontological assumption of “one optimal universal truth,” one “setting” for ideal leaders.

In trait theories the focus is on searching for ideal qualifications of successful leaders with scientific methods. The aim was to work out a list of “right” traits which should work out as tools for leaders to compare each other. *“Early leadership studies attempted to identify, measure, and isolate universal traits successful leaders needed to possess to be effective or to be considered leaders”* (Hansen & al., 2007, p.548). The exhausting lists of leader qualifications were followed by behavioural theories trying to find idealised behaviour or style of leading for different situations. The one extreme concentrates on a democratic, human-centered style and the other on “matters,” on management, representing an autocratic style of leading. Both styles are used depending on the situation.

Situational theories followed the behavioural theories by claiming that followers represent different maturity levels in relation to the tasks. Each maturity level calls for different styles of leading. The first level follower needs management; clear rules and objectives. In the second level, attention is paid to a follower’s human needs and motivational issues. The third level opens up more to the democratic style, taking care of the working climate. On the last level responsibility of the work is given to the follower. In situational theory a leader is encouraged to analyse the followers’ level of maturity and then choose the right style. This indicates that the leader must learn and master the whole style repertoire. A slightly different theory is the contingency theory which highlights the meaning of different situations at hand. Difficult and unclear situations urged for a different kind of leading than obvious situations (House & Aditya, 1997; Grint, 2011; Hansen & al., 2007; Wood, 2005).

Leader-centric research turned out to be “ineffective” while the context seemed to be the decisive matter. In some context one style was better and in some another style. On the other hand, it turned out that a leader could develop objective qualities – they were not born with them (Avolio & Rechar, 2008; Hansen & al., 2007; Meindl, 1995). It was time to open up the research for more relational perspectives.

In the 80s, leadership research seriously started to include followers in the research picture. The research became more relationship-oriented. From this perspective, leadership is considered *“a two-way influence relationship between a leader and a follower aimed primarily at attaining mutual goals”* (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.656). The focus is mostly on interpersonal relationships, leader-member relationships but also leader – group and leader – larger collectivities focuses occur. Uhl-Bien categorises dominant relationship approaches as leader-member exchange theories, Hollander’s relational theory, charismatic theory, social networks, and Rost’s postindustrial leadership (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Hansen refers to transformational, visionary, and authentic approaches that shifted the focus to relationship orientation (Hansen & al., 2007).

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory is about the quality of exchange between leaders and each of their followers. The very basic of the approach is the development of an effective relationship, a partnership between leaders and followers. LMX is an entity approach focusing on individuals' characteristics and behaviour in interaction with each other. (Dahler & Hosking, 1995; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Zhou, 2009; Breukelen & al., 2006). The success of leadership is affected by the readiness of leaders and followers to abandon the formal roles and negotiate new types of relations. Instead of analysing individual behaviour, attention is paid to the interaction (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Dvir, 2003; Peltonen, 2007).

Hollander provides a relationship model which focuses on relational processes but its standpoint is individualistic. This model describes processes that are "owned" by the individuals involved in the relationships. According to this theory, relationship between follower and leader constructs differently with different individuals. Some relations become more hierarchical and some more collegial (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Hollander, 1995; Peltonen, 2007).

Another relationship-based theory comes from Rost, who considers relations in a broader context of an organisation. His idea concentrates on leaders and collaborators' actions together. In Rost's post-industrial leadership theory, acting is possible in multidirectional ways – not just top down. The leaders and collaborators are the actors of these multidirectional relationships. He argues: *"If leadership is what the relationship is, then both collaborators and leaders are all doing leadership. There is no such thing as followership"* (Rost, 1995, p.133).

Charismatic relationship approach focuses on relations between leader and follower affected by extraordinary charisma. *"Charismatic leaders are magnetic personalities that draw followers and motivate them to achieve higher level of performance"* (Hansen & al., 2007, p.550). The theory is based on the idea that followers are dedicated to an organisation or a leader because the relationship between the leader and followers is emotionally special (Hansen & al., 2007; Uhl-Bien, 2006).

A similar approach is transformational leadership. It aims at peak performances through communicating the vision of the organisation in an inspiring, motivating way to empower followers. Leader's role is central and exemplary. It is a subject-object relationship. Follower's role is seen in transformational leadership as a dynamic partner. Through a charismatic, visionary, and an energetic leader, followers are inspired to perform beyond all expectations. The leader's storytelling works as an effective tool to communicate the mission and vision to followers in a meaningful way (Bass, 2008; Hansen & al., 2007; Avolio & Rechar, 2008).

Following in the footsteps of transformational leadership but countering its theatrical acts, authentic leadership emerged. Its pivotal idea is that leaders must be true to themselves in order to become authentic. Authentic performance can be sensed by the followers, which, in turn, lead to trust relationships between leaders and followers (Hansen & al., 2007).

The leader-centric theories presuppose that only individuals with certain characteristics and behavioural styles are appropriate for leader roles. Leaders are equal to the concept of leadership and serve as “*Prime Movers*” of organisational matters. “*It is leaders who inspire others, leaders who create opportunities, and leaders who influence values*” (Wood, 2005, p.4). Another centric view in leadership research developed from idealistic follower qualifications and behaviour.

2.6.2. Follower-centric research

Towards the 21st century when globalisation and information technology made the environment more complex and multi-problematic, follower issues became more topical in leadership research. It was time to “*bring the followers (i.e., subordinates) into the equation (...)*” (Carsten & al. 2010). Cleveland states that

“(...) the spread of knowledge” that will enable followers to play a much more powerful role in the future than they did in the past” (Cleveland in Kellerman, 2008, p.29).

Due to these changes, work in organisations became more complex and vulnerable. Leadership research was taken under reanalysis. Researchers started to channel their interest more and more into the follower as well as to the relation and interaction of the whole. In the mid 60s the first pioneer pointing out the importance of followers was Zaleznik. His research consisted of conflict behaviour of subordinates, including a typology of the dysfunctional followers calling them impulsive, compulsive, masochistic, and withdrawn subordinates (Zaleznik, 1965; Kellerman, 2008).

In 1988 Kelley wrote his famous article “In Praise of Follower”

“Leaders matter greatly. But in searching so zealously for better leaders we tend to lose sight of the people these leaders will lead. Without his armies, after all, Napoleon was just a man with grandiose ambition” (Kelley, 1988, p.142).

Unlike Zaleznik’s, Kelley’s research interest was in exemplary, effective followers. Kelley researched behaviour that leads to effective and less effective following in organisations. The behaviour was explained by axis of passive/active and independent, critical/dependent, uncritical. He named these followership styles as conformist, passive, alienated, exemplary, and pragmatist followers (Kelley, 1988; 1992).

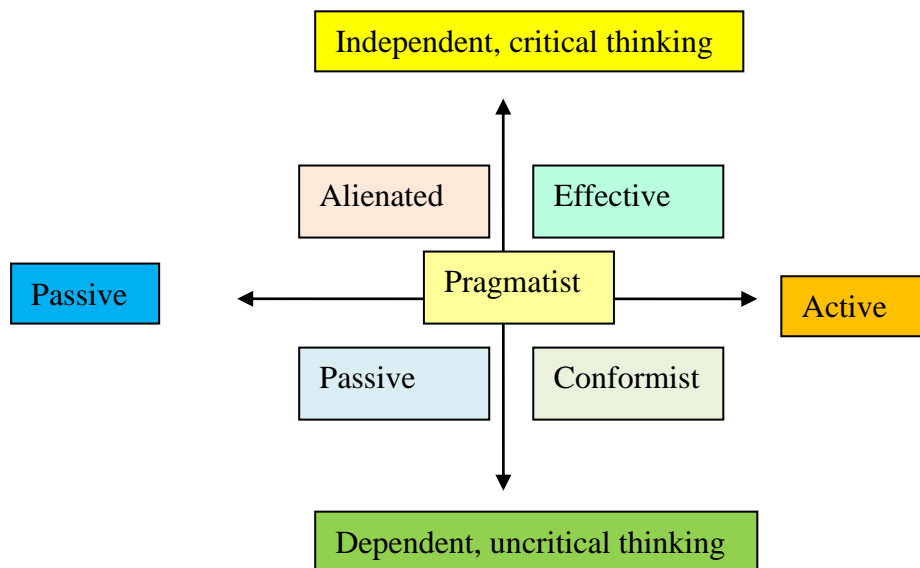


Figure 6: Followership styles (Kelley, 1988)

Passive followers, ‘sheep’ in the original version, lack initiative and the sense of responsibility. They perform at a minimum level. Conformists, originally ‘yes-people,’ are more active but still dependent on leader activity. Alienated followers are independent and critical thinkers but they are not active in carrying out tasks. Something had made them cynical. Pragmatist followers, in the middle of the picture, are survivors who always find a way. Effective followers are “the most ideal” of Kelley’s followers. They think and act independently. They share qualities such as good self-management, loyalty to organisation and its purposes, they are competent and focused and they are courageous, honest, and credible. Kelley argues that *“instead of seeing the leadership role as superior to and more active than the role of the follower, we can think of them as equal but different activities”* (Kelley 1988; p.146).

In the mid 90s, Chaleff continued pioneering in the follower thematic. Chaleff is a practitioner deeply interested in followers. In his writings, a follower is understood in its original meaning (see Chapter 2.1.) as an assistant, a supporter, or a helper of the leader. His intention is to reach a more balanced relationship between leaders and followers by concentrating on encouraging the follower side. The base for balancing is the concept of responsibility. He asks questions like:

“How does a follower effectively support a leader and relieve these pressures? How does a follower become a “shaper” rather than simply an “implementer”? How does a follower contribute to leadership

development rather than become a critic of leadership failing? (Chaleff, 2009, p.2).

Chaleff's ideology is based on empowering the contemporary follower from the chains of obeying. His ideal is a courageous and ambitious follower who assumes responsibility, who serves the leader, who challenges the leader, who takes initiative in change processes, who uses his/her own moral as a tool, and who speaks up to the hierarchy. Chaleff also presents a four quadrant model of follower styles related to a leader. The vertical axis represents the degree a follower supports a leader and the horizontal axis stands for the degree of how much a follower is willing to challenge the leader's behaviour and policies. In this model, followers are divided into four styles: partners, implementers, individualists, and resource. These four styles refer to follower behaviour in organisations. A partner fully supports leaders but also challenges them if necessary. An implementer is a trustworthy worker who respects authority instead of challenging them. A resource is doing the minimum expected and nothing else. Their primary interest lies elsewhere (for example family). (Chaleff, 2009) Chaleff sums up the model by saying that

"The goal is to change followers' own internal estimations of their ability to influence leaders and generate an increased sense of agency and responsibility" (Chaleff, 2008, p.77).

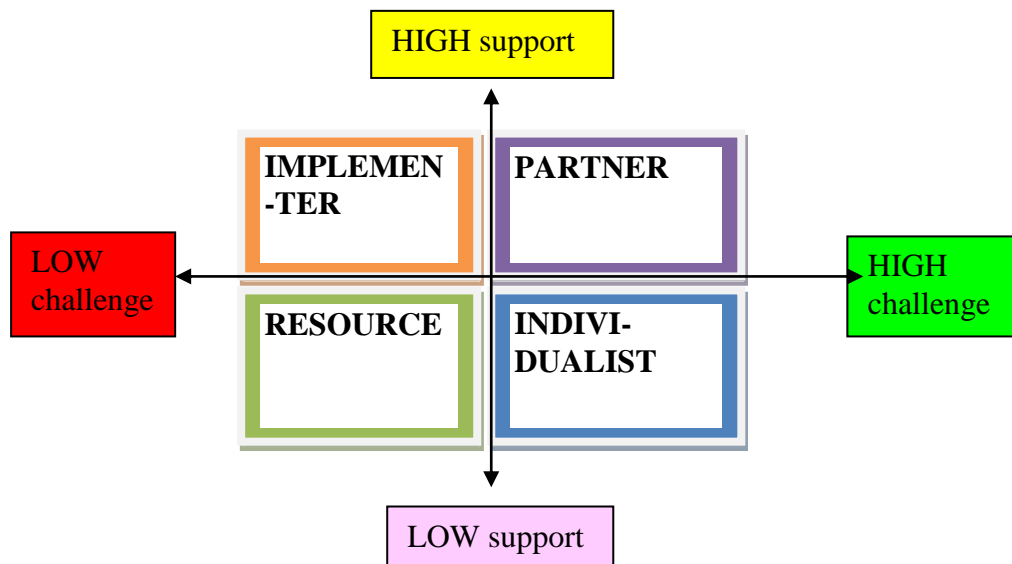


Figure 7: Follower styles (Chaleff, 2008)

Follower-centric research has followed in the footsteps of trait theories in leader-centric research. The ultimate findings have been individualistic descriptions of an ideal follower. Both Kelley and Chaleff came to the

conclusion that *“the qualities that make effective followers are, confusingly enough, pretty much the same qualities found in effective leaders”* (Kelley, 1988, p.146). It looked like a dead end.

In the 90s, Meindl’s “The romance of leadership,” a strong follower-centric notion of understanding leadership, highlighted followers’ thoughts. It is a social constructionist approach asking how leaders are constructed and represented in followers’ thought systems. It focuses on the linkage between leaders and followers constructed in the minds of the followers. It put weight on images of leaders constructed in the followers’ minds. It also assumes *“that followers react to, and are more influenced by, their constructions of the leader’s personality than they are by the “true personality of the leader”* (Meindl, 1995, p.330).

Kellerman’s view to approach followers is a question of following. Why do people follow a leader and primarily how do we follow? Her typology is based on one axis system: the level of engagement. Followers are divided into five types of engagement: isolate, bystander, participant, activist, and diehard. Her typology is based on rank, i.e. followers have less power, authority, and influence. In her research each follower type is traced in relation to the leader as well as to other followers. She underlines the followers’ readiness to act.

Isolates don’t care for anything at the workplace. They are alienated from the organisation, from co-workers, and from the leaders. Kellerman says that they are a problem.

“Isolates are completely detached. They do not care about their leaders, or know anything about them, or respond to them in any way. Their alienation is, nevertheless of consequence. By default – by knowing nothing and doing nothing – Isolates strengthen still further leaders who already have the upper hand” (Kellerman, 2008, p.86).

The other four types of followers are somehow engaged in the work. They are engaged in all dimensions; in leader, follower, and organisation dimensions. Bystanders are observers. They don’t participate. They want to stay neutral in all situations, in all dimensions and they do this deliberately. They tacitly support whoever and whatever is on the horizon. Participants engage either by favoring or opposing their leaders, other followers, or organisations. They do care enough to invest their resources on their work environment. Activists feel strongly about their leaders. They are energetic, eager, and engaged. They have invested in their work and people and they work hard on behalf of their leaders or in opposite cases even unseat them. Diehards are devoted to individuals, ideas, or both. They would do anything to support or destroy their subject.

“Diehards are defined by their dedication, including their willingness to risk life and limb. Being a Diehard is all-consuming. It is who you are. It determines what you do” (Kellerman, 2008, p.179).

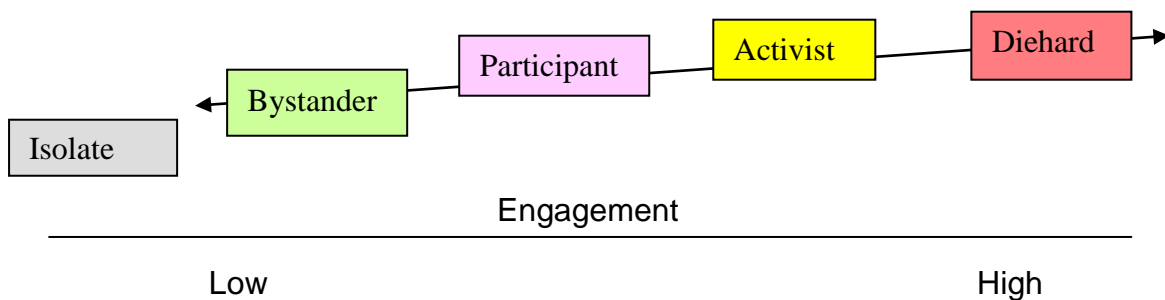


Figure 8: Engagement level typology (Kellerman, 2008)

It is noteworthy that Kellerman's typology includes dimensions both for and against. Her intention is not to change ranking but to change followers' response to ranking, their response to their leaders and to the situations at hand. She sums up her engagement typology of followers as follows:

"My primary point is this: we are all followers. Followers are us. This does not, of course, mean that all of us follow all of the time – sometimes we lead. But all of us follow some of the time. It's human condition" (Kellerman, 2008, p. 93).

In his dissertation, Jordan studied the exemplary acts of followership. He sought to better understand the motivations of highly engaged, exemplary followers. He came to the conclusion that leadership was not their primary source of motivation. It was the culture and climate of the organisation providing psychological empowerment. Another finding states that the connection to the respective organisation was crucial. They were walking acts of their organisation's mission statements. Exemplary followers also share the values of the organisation and express the importance of co-workers (Jordan, 2009).

Looking through a historical perspective, through the lenses of organisational theory and leadership research, this research has given perspective to the question posed in the beginning of this chapter; what are followers made of and where are they made in? Historical lenses reveal that followers have been understood either as servants or independent workers. Both in slavery and in industrialism, followers were made to serve the "master," i.e. owner or master. In federalist society, each individual was his/her own master. The lenses of organisational theory show "followerism" to be made inside the organisational context and followers are either allowed to think or they aren't. The mainstream of leadership research paid very little attention to followers in its eighty first years. The mainstream research was about leaders and the whole

term 'leadership' equalled an individual leader. In leadership research and in the definitions of leadership, 'follower' was "born" only recently. But all in all research had concentrated on individuals, on entities such as leaders or followers: *"Unfortunately, multiplying traits of leaders, times types of followers, times samples of situations, time group interactions has led to more variety than anyone can manage"* (Wildawsky in Czarniawska, 1991, p.531). This entity perspective was next challenged by a collective understanding of leadership. What did it mean for leadership? This we will discuss next.

2.6.3. Towards more holistic ideas of leadership

Towards the end of the 20th century, the individual-oriented views, i.e. leader-centricity and follower-centricity, were found insufficient to explain the needs of organisations living in complex environments. The idea of understanding leadership as "one person in charge" became too questionable. In other words, the idea of leaders being responsible for everything became unbearable. Leadership must offer more. Widespread and effective education systems in western societies bore fruit and followers' role became more partner-like. The time where continuous control and command were expected was over. The traits and behaviours, i.e. the individualistic standpoint, didn't explain the leadership phenomenon well enough. The paradigm was open for change. The relation between leaders and followers formed the ground for the next step (Crevani & al., 2007; 2010). The Individual perspective had saturated itself somehow.

A more holistic view of leadership emerged and gained interest among scholars. In scientific literature the phenomenon has been described with various expressions such as collective leadership, shared leadership, distributed leadership, and collaborative leadership (Bolden, 2011). The descriptions are different in emphasis and are somewhat dependent on geographical location. What they have in common is an ideological view of leadership where all participants are empowered to share power in contrast to centralising it to a single individual. *"(...) leadership involves roles and activities that can, and should, be shared among members of a team or organization"* (Pearce & al., 2009, p.234). Leadership is seen more as a group activity or network of interacting individuals. In practice this means that leadership should be shared to those having the best knowledge, skills, and abilities at hand and that ability, not status, should always be the decisive factor.

The fundamental difference between a shared leadership and traditional understanding lies in the influencing process. The power is spread broadly and influencing takes place among a set of followers. This view of leadership does not replace hierarchies, but it steers action and decision-making processes to multiple shoulders (Pearce & al. 2009). Shared leadership is a more participative style. (Koivunen, 2002) *"(...) lots of people are engaged in it rather than just those in formal positions; that leadership is collaborative rather than controlling; that leadership is compassionate rather than*

dispassionate (...)” (Raelin, in Grint, 2010, p.90). On the other hand, the shared form of leadership still remains a leader-centric approach. It is the leader who shares the power (Crevani & al., 2010).

Another interesting approach is called aesthetic leadership. It challenges the previous approaches first of all by rejecting the objectivist and scientific realistic ideologies that aim to predict outcomes. Instead, aesthetic leadership

“focuses on how these phenomena are produced and emerge, and attempts to describe the subjective felt meanings as experienced by leaders and followers” (Hansen & al. 2007).

In aesthetic leadership, interpretations of leadership are subjective. Knowledge is created through sensory experiences including feelings and thoughts. Its purpose is to widen the world view of leadership to cover sensuous knowing of the everyday and its mundane actions. Language skills, listening, gazing, touching, emotions, and feelings are considered valuable ways of knowing. An important, distinguishing factor in aesthetics is also direct experience on the spot. The process-oriented, subjective, and interactive nature of aesthetic leadership emphasises bodily knowledge and rejects the Cartesian dualism of separated mind and body (Hansen & al., 2007; Koivunen & Wennes, 2011). Ladkin talks about ‘leading beautifully,’ stressing the importance of the embodied role of the leaders (Ladkin, 2008; 2010). Hatch et al. see aesthetics as an answer to the growing complexity of leadership. Instead of understanding leadership as a rational way of organising, they suggest that leadership has three faces; those of a manager, an artist, and a priest. The artist and the priest are complementary faces needed to boost creativity and inspiration organisations require in continuous change processes inherent to the 21st century (Hatch & al. 2005; 2006).

I have made quite a journey on regarding followers; starting from etymology and the concept itself and through the federalist and industrialised paths of followers in American history. I also looked at organisational research, focusing on followers’ position in it. The last part of this chapter reviewed leadership research and its traditions in accordance with followers. I conclude this chapter by saying that followers’ history and participation in leadership discussion have nomadic characteristics: followers’ position was always moving from one place to another. In my view they have been “strangers in their own land” in leadership research. This is why this study wants to shed light on their path before moving on to discuss relational understanding of leadership.

Hijacking the overall view of leadership research, this study came to the conclusion that the “ecology” of leadership has been largely based on idealism and individualism. Theory after theory leadership, ideas of an optimal leader, and ideal skill combinations for leaders are delivered. Crevani, Lindgren and Packendorff note that “(...) *leadership studies as an academic field has thus been preoccupied with the never-ending task of identifying identities or practices related to successful leadership*” (Crevani et al., 2010,

p.77). In other words, studies on leadership are meant to produce solutions affecting organisational effectiveness.

That is to say that leadership is fully loaded with idealistic expectations of traits and behavioural norms. We all seem to expect a model for the perfect leader (Yukl, 2010; Bryman & al., 2011; Hosking, 2006; Knights & al., 1992). This individual-oriented view of leadership has been supported by scientific literature. It has been circling around the heroic leader since the early years of scientific research. This analogy fully explained leadership as analogous to individualistic leader existence. Due to that also the whole leadership training and development branch has been appointed only to leaders (Hosking, 2006). Methods from physical sciences have been applied to leadership research, identifying and ripping leadership in parts, measuring it, and then idealising it voicing out a universal “recipe,” an objective truth (Ladkin, 2010). This historically narrow “one-man” approach has spread out wide and is well rooted in organisations still in the 21st century. But the shift has happened, the “climate” is about to change or let’s say rather completed in a way.

“If we want to take leadership research beyond the leader-centered tradition, we must also challenge our deeply rooted tendency to make the abstract notion of ‘leadership’ concrete in the guises of individual managers that lead hoards of followers towards the achievement of shared goals” (Crevani & al., 2010, p.78).

Contemporary leadership research and discussion has moved towards understanding leadership as an activity instead of a role (Sims, 2010). It argues for leadership as being a relational process in which people interact. This study joins the discussion where leadership is viewed as a relational, social process.

“We must instead try to redefine leadership in terms of processes and practices organized by people in interaction (...)” (Crevani & al., 2010, p.78).

The arising new paradigm of leadership research of the 21st century is based on social constructionism. Leadership is seen as a social process based on relations (Hosking & al., 1995; Day, 2001). The relational leadership discussion has divided into two approaches; the entity approach and the relational approach which can be seen to rather complete than exclude each other. Relational leadership will be discussed next. It offers a whole new paradigm full of unexplored paths to researchers. In this research relational leadership serves as a theoretic background or orientation.

3.

RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP AS A STANDPOINT CONSTRUCTING LEADERSHIP

One of the most incisive and imposing descriptions of the relational process of understanding a phenomenon has been delivered two thousand five hundred years ago by a Greek philosopher:

"You cannot step twice into the same river, for other waters are continually flowing on" (Greek philosopher Heraclitus 500 B.C. in Morgan, 1997, p.251).

This utterance includes the constitutive principle of the continuous flux of becoming. It is also the focal point of relational leadership. The focal point of relational leadership is that leadership is a process that is constantly changing. In this chapter leadership is introduced in the light of a social construction. Relational leadership performs as a theoretically oriented standpoint and arena of my study. I view leadership as being a reflection of socially constructed phenomena. It will be introduced in two parts, divided here into entity and relational perspectives. They both refer to the relational aspect of leadership and both underline the meaning of relations in leadership but their frame is different. As an overarching frame of these two perspectives, relational leadership 'theory' (RLT) is presented and opened up for discussion (Uhl-Bien, 2006).

In the beginning of the last century, philosophers Whitehead and Bergson manifested revolutionary thoughts of leadership. Their idea of leadership was more complete and they argued for leadership as a continual state of flux and as a continuous flow of becoming. They claimed that leadership can't be divided up endlessly. Bergson believed that *"the phenomena of our experience are internally related – the flow of experience does not reveal a discrete series of unrelated parts: the parts come as related"* (Bergson in

Wood, 2005, p.5). He continues by saying that the continuity of experience *"cannot be subordinated to an infinitely divisible continuum; it must be understood as an irreducible event that has no gaps between its parts"* (Bergson in Wood, 2005, p.5). In these thoughts, the seeds for viewing leadership as a process phenomenon had been sowed.

3.1. Leadership as social construction

"Concepts, such as liberty, freedom, wealth and leadership are fundamentally socially constructed" (Ladkin, 2010, pp.19 - 20).

The abovementioned concepts are immaterial entities. They do not exist independently without human beings. They burst into flames when human beings give them their meaning in interaction. Each culture and era creates its own understanding of these concepts. Leadership as a fundamentally socially constructed phenomenon reflects shared meanings of human interaction developed in each era and each culture. Leadership is not an objective, stable individualistic phenomenon, which could exist independently of human presence (Ladkin, 2010; Hosking, 2006; 2011; Uhl-Bien, 2006).

"(...) leadership can only be expressed through particular localized conditions and the individuals who take part in both creating it and making sense of it" (Ladkin, 2010, p.27).

"In the postindustrial economy, which I think is increasingly evident in the twenty-first century, leadership must be defined as a relationship wherein leaders and followers collaborate because they are mutually invested in a direction and because they are inherently interdependent in a common process" (Rost, 2008, p.56).

According to Ladkin leadership is an invisible moment, which can be seen to exist only in socially constructed communities, for example in organisations (always including their history). Leadership cannot exist without its human actors - leaders and followers, the symbiotic actors of the moment itself. The moment reflects the participant's interaction towards an explicit or implicit purpose.

"(...) the leadership moment identifies the 'pieces' of leadership which interact in order for leadership to be experienced. Leaders must relate to followers and together they interact within a particular context and work towards an explicit or implicit purpose. These pieces also interact dynamically, with the consequence that the way in which followers perceive the context will affect the way in which they interpret the leader's pronouncements, the follower's behaviors will affect the leader's and together leader's and followers' actions will demonstrate how a purpose is being understood and embodied" (Ladkin, 2010, p.27).

An important contributor in social construction process is also the viewpoint of human actors. How does one know? In any given situation, the closeness, the preconceptions, and the psychological predispositions of the perceiver “judge” what is being perceived. In other words, illustrating leadership depends on the “side” the phenomenon is brought into light and there will always be “sides” one cannot perceive. Thinking about different sides of leadership, there are at least the leaders’ and followers’ sides as well as organisational and market environment sides. This multidimensionality of leadership reflects the social nature of leadership. The very presence of various sides is significant in the occurrence of leadership. The full or the most proper understanding of a phenomenon would support the presence of all sides (Ladkin, 2010).

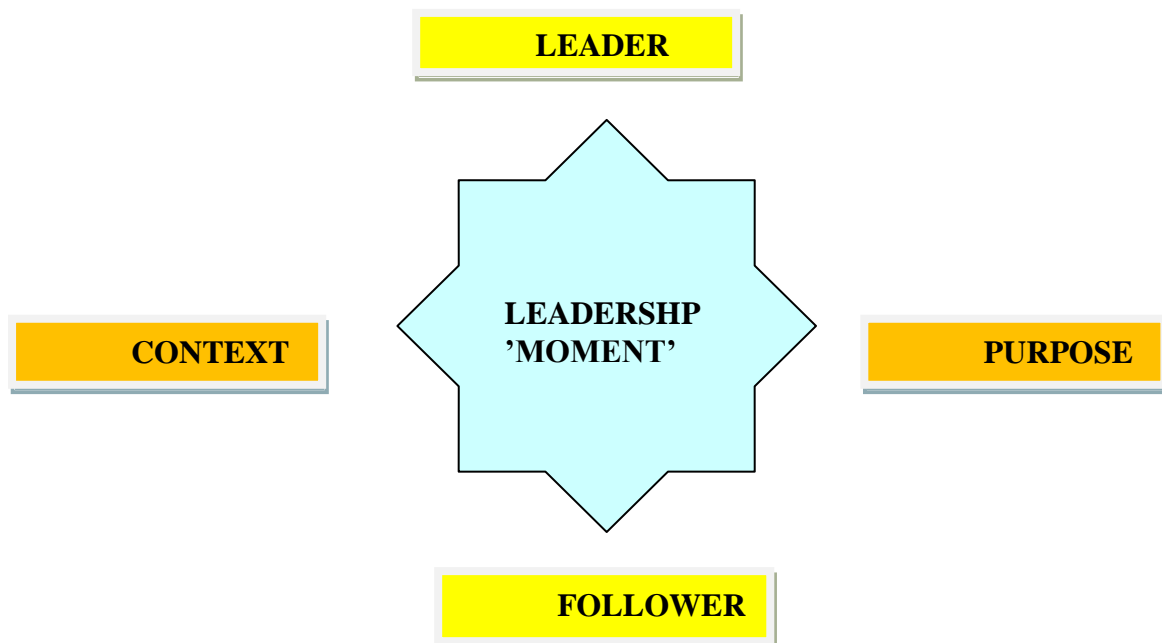


Figure 9: The leadership 'moment' (Ladkin, 2010)

As leadership is understood as a social construction of particular human actors, it is also understood as highly context-dependent. As an immaterial phenomenon, the existence of leadership is dependent on its social constructions in human contexts. To “organise” the contextual nature of leadership, I borrow a concept called “Lifeworld” from Husserl’s philosophy. Lifeworld is a phenomenological concept describing our everyday in which we interact, communicate, and share meanings of human lives. Lifeworld highlights the importance of understanding phenomena in the actual environment where they arise. This means that in order to understand leadership as a phenomenon, it shouldn’t be removed from its local-historical context (Osborn & al., 2002). This also means that defining leadership is a

continuous circle. *“In fact there could be as many descriptions of leadership as there are situations in which it arises (...)”* (Ladkin, 2010, p.26). Hence, contextuality defines the relational leadership discussion. Because leadership is a socially constructed phenomenon, shared meanings formulate the basis of human collaboration and living together in a productive and harmonious way. An important notion is that meanings are not objectively given statements. They are rather formulated and created in a very local context. They are in continuous flux (Ladkin, 2010; Hosking, 2011).

“Meaning-making enables organizational members to work together towards a common interpretation of reality. Without such shared understanding organizational activity lacks coherence and common direction” (Ladkin, 2010, p.103).

Leadership is illustrated here through a picture. In the relational approach to leadership, both the entity and the relational perspective view leadership as a social process. From the entity perspective, this process is understood as the perceptions and cognitions of an individual engaged in relationships. The individuals are the *“makers”* of the process. The relational perspective views individuals and organisations as *“ongoing multiple constructions made “in” processes (...)”* (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.655).

To illustrate the framework of relational leadership theory following figure visualizes it in the context of leadership.



Figure 10: Frame of relational leadership “theory”

As further clarification of the illustrations above could be used the quotation:

“A social and relational approach to leadership highlights the ideas that these meaning-making processes and the attributions of leadership do not just occur in people’s minds, but instead, they are always social, rooted in social interaction” (Ospina & Schall, 2001, p.5).

Before moving on to relational understanding of leadership, I introduce a table explaining some differences of the vocabulary swarming in the text in order to orient the reader.

Term	Explanation
Relation	An aspect or quality that connects two or more things or parts as being or belonging or working
Relational	Characterised or constituted by relations
Relationality	The state or property of having a relational force; the state or condition of being relational
Relationship	The state of being related or interrelated; the relation connecting or binding participants in a relationship; a state of affairs existing between those having relations r dealings.

Table 2: Differences of terms (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012)

With help of the explained terms, I will introduce the entity perspective and relational perspective in order view their different ways of conceptualising and operationalising relational leadership (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012).

3.2. Entity approach

The entity perspective approaches leadership relations from individual focus (leaders, followers, and others), identifying behavioural styles, personal qualities, intentions, perceptions, and expectations engaged in relationships. This more traditional orientation in leadership research is called relationship-oriented in contrast to relational leadership. Relationships are perceived from the standpoint of an individual, of a certain entity, e.g. a leader or a follower. (Uhl-Bien, 2006),

Epistemological view in entity approach is objective and it is based on the Cartesian mind-body separation (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000). *“As such the “knowing” individual is understood as the architect and controller of an internal and external order which makes sense with respect to the array of their personal “possessions” (their mind contents)”* (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.655). In this view relationships are understood as subject-object relationships. *“Social relations are enacted by subjects to achieve knowledge about, and influence over, other people and groups”* (Dachler & Hosking, 1995, p.3).

In the entity perspective, leadership is viewed as an individual reality-based phenomenon focusing mostly on manager-follower exchanges regarding conditions as already “being.” Leadership can be seen as a relationship between followers and leaders sharing a mutual goal (Hosking, 2011; Uhl-Bien, 2006).

Examples of relationship-oriented entity theories are Leader-Member exchange theory, Charismatic leadership theory, Hollander’s relational theory, and Rost’s post-industrial leadership theory. These are discussed more detailed in Chapter 2. Instead of approaching the relations from an individualistic point of view in relational approach the relating is understood as process and the leap is done from subjectivist ontology to process ontology (Wood, 2005; Uhl-Bien, 2006).

3.3. Relational approach

“We need to understand leadership, and for this, it is not enough to understand what leaders do” (Hosking, 1988, p.147).

In contrast to the entity approach’s focus on independent individuals, the relational approach concentrates on interrelated, intersubjective, and interdependent organisational phenomena. In other words, the relational orientation suggests that *“the real work of the human organization occurs within the space of interaction between its members”* (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000, p.551).

The term ‘relational leadership’ is quite new and is therefore still open to interpretations (Brower & al., 2000; Drath 2001; Uhl-Bien, 2003; 2005). Recent research has moved on to a different paradigm of leadership research. It is called the “relational turn” and arrived to leadership studies later than other disciplines (Uhl-Bien & al., 2012). In essence it has changed the focus of leadership studies from individuals to processes. This fundamental new orientation has also been called by Harding as a *“voyage of discovery”* and definitely needs a new thinking space as well (Hosking, 2006, p.4). In literature this thinking space is often named the “space between.” Originally the concept comes from theological philosopher Martin Buber. In his philosophy, true interaction or real meaning emerges in “the space between”. The core of his work points out that *“self and other are not separable, but are rather, coevolving in ways that need to be accounted for in our organizational research”* (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000, p.551). Wood refers to the same phenomenon by talking about *“indeterminate middle”* (Wood, 2005, p.16). He argues that leadership does not locate in apparent A (designated leader) nor does it locate at B, from the position that is recognised (mind of followers). It does not consist of different relations between A and B either. It is rather the indeterminate middle of moments of inseparable A and B, each necessarily referring back to each other (Wood, 2005). Bringing this relationality to leadership research connects us to search for the invisibility, the threads

connecting the actors engaged in the processes and relationships (Uhl-Bien & al., 2012). Leadership is hence surrounded by indeterminacy and dissipativeness, an acquaintanceship that is somewhat rare in our thinking and challenges the participants (Hosking, 2006; Barker, 2001).

In this study the understanding of relational leadership is based on three fundamental aspects. Firstly, the core and the basis of relational perspective is in processes, not individuals. According to Wood it is not possible to determine leadership as any particular point. *“Rather, it is consistently ‘in flow’ and continuously emerging from those processes ‘in’ the ‘between’ of points”* (Wood, 2005, p.7). Secondly, processes are multiple local-cultural-historical realities of their nature. The context forms the key to the process. As Slife puts it: *“We are contextual beings, with inbuilt relational resources to other contextual beings”* (Slife in Uhl-bien & Ospina, 2012, p.xxi). This places the scene, the stage of leadership instead of individuals in the center (Wood, 2005). The third aspect refers to the ongoing nature of processes. The process of leadership has no beginning and no end (Hosking, 2006; Wood, 2005). Barker suggests a new framework for leadership studies by referring to *“dissipative systems”* which continually renew themselves inside a dynamic context (Barker, 2001, 485).

The relational perspective understands knowledge as socially constructed and distributed, not as individually stored and accumulated. *“That which is understood as real is differently constructed in different relational and historical/cultural settings”* (Dachler & Hosking, 1995, p.4). Looking from an epistemological viewpoint, knowing occurs simultaneously between two subjects or phenomena. It is always a process of relating, which is a constructive, ongoing process of meaning creation. Meaning creation has no origin, no end. It is always in *“the process of making and meanings are limited by socio-cultural context”* (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.655). In the context of leadership this means that no focus is placed on the attributive approach of individuals and relationships. It means focusing on the social construction of processes which are outcomes of the leadership phenomenon themselves (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Meindl, 1995).

The reference to “relational” includes the relating to written and spoken language and to nonverbal actions, things, and events. *“(…) process of relating (words, things, events…) make leaders, organizations and competition (…) real and makes these realities heroes and villains, good and bad, right and wrong”* (Hosking, 2007, p.249). Every word, act, and object is a potential contributor to communication and therefore to processes of reality construction. Language becomes central in the relational way of understanding reality (Uhl-Bien, 2006).

“Reality is no longer discoursed as objectively or subjectively known by the mind but as an ongoing construction in language-bases processes” (Hosking, 2007, p.248).

The relational approach as a *“thinking space”* opens up for multiple realities contrasting the positivist “one reality” (Hosking, 2006; 2007; Van den Haar &

Hosking, 2004). Cooper refers to leadership process as *“always momentary, tentative and transient (...) (it) occurs in that imperceptible moment between the known and the unknown”* (Cooper in Wood, 2005, p.13).

The relational approach is based upon the concept of “local” in context with reality. This contrasts the previous assumption of universal realities and of the knower as separable from the reality. This highlights the uniqueness of each organisation as a context (Osborn & al., 2002). The knower and what is known are made and always redefined in the process.

“The processes of which we have spoken make and remake everything we know including what we know as “self”, what and who we know as “other” and self-other relations” (Hosking, 2007, p.251).

Ladkin approaches the local-historical aspect by introducing a phenomenological term “absence.” Leadership moments consist also from invisible factors, of “absences,” which are applied to every leadership moment and which we should have in mind when discussing the phenomenon. Absence means a powerful invisible force, which affects the social phenomena. In other words, a leadership moment is not a “tabula rasa” action. Each moment is affected by the different kind of expectations of leaders and followers. Each moment consists of the organisational and personal history of the participants. Perhaps these “absences” indeed play an important role when seeing leadership as a complex phenomenon (Ladkin, 2010).

Instead of viewing organisations as structures or entities, the relational perspective conceives organisations as *“relational networks of changing persons, moving forward together through space and time, in a complex interplay of effects between individual organizational members and the system into which they enter”* (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.661).

The voyage of discovery of the process ideology is first of all ontological. The change of focus in relational leadership from objectivist ontology to process ontology has also changed the way questions are asked: ‘what’ has been replaced with ‘how.’ For example, a question could be asked on how the realities of leadership are interpreted within the network of relations. Relational research does not speak about face-to-face, inter-personal relations between known actors. The basic unit, relationship as a process, is constructed rather through *“written and spoken language, through nonverbal actions, things and events”* (Hosking, 2006, p.662). Abel & Simons expose this in following:

“A shift in our understanding of organizations as “things” toward experiencing them more as an array of stories, always in the act of construction whose meaning and relevance is context-dependent. Meaning is constantly negotiated and renegotiated in the relational act of conversation, deriving its meaning within the context of its particular sociocultural location. The world is seen as being brought into being via our collaborative “storying” of our experience, implying that as human,

we can actively intervene in constructing the societies and organizations we'd like to see emerge" (Abel & Simons in Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.663).

Has the relational approach been tried out before? Uhl-Bien refers to Lenard Sayles' as an "almost" relational researcher from the sixties with his work *Managerial Behaviour*. He described organisations as systems in which managers actions are embedded within "*a dynamic and unfolding history of role-bounded interpersonal relationships*" (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 663) not only in an organizational and environmental context.

Sayles realised that much of the managerial work was done in lateral relationships. He also described management as an iterative and messy process, in which managerial actions are not separate managerial activities. They are rather a social process shaped in interaction with other organisational actors (Stewart, 1999). Sayles continues by saying that the organisation is actively held together by a web of interpersonal relationships that is built through ongoing interaction. "*The one enduring objective (of managers) is the effort to build and maintain a predictable, reciprocating system or relationship, the behavioural patterns of which stay within reasonable physical limits*" (Sayles, 1964, pp. 258 - 259). This leads to a search for a moving equilibrium because the parameters of the system (the division of labour and the controls) evolve and change. Thus the manager endeavours to introduce regularity in a world that will never allow him to achieve the ideal. That is the inherent challenge, the essential nature of managerial positions (Stewart, 1999).

Wilfred Drath refers to "relational leadership," stating that leadership is not personal dominance or interpersonal influence but rather "*a process of relational dialogue in which organizational members engage and interact to construct knowledge systems together*" (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.663). The relational dialogue enhances the capacity of a system to accomplish leadership tasks at various levels of complexity.

"The very idea of leadership – what it is and how it works and even how people even know it when they see it – is in the process of changing...Nothing less than a revolution of mind is required, a shift in order of thought, a reformation of how leadership is known" (Drath, 2001, p.124).

Murrell also refers to relational leadership as a concept. He sees leadership as shared responsibility. He constructs around the "ship" connotation. "*The leadership is a social act, a construction of a 'ship' as a collective vehicle to help take us where we as a group, organization of society desire to go*" (Murrell, 1997, p.135). In his model of relational leadership the focus is broadened to include more actors to the process than just the leader and the leader-follower relationship. In his study understanding the collective act of leadership is based on human processes: on how people decide, act, and present themselves to each other. He refers to relations other than hierarchy-

based relations and those where “*nurturing and supporting roles could be legitimized as means of influence*” (Murrell, 1997, p.39). The future of leadership will be built around relational networks and around the feeling of shared community ethics enabling people to find meaning in their jobs (Murrell, 1997; Uhl-Bien, 2006).

Interesting relational leadership research is done at the moment by Crevani, Packendorff, and Lindgren. Their analytical focus is on daily practices and interactions of leadership. The purpose is to estrange their research from “*abstract performative ideals*” (Crevani & al., 2010, p.84) and concentrate on processes of daily interaction using participant observation and in-depth interviews as methods (Crevani & al., 2010). Raelin describes this approach with the words ‘leadership-as-practice,’ a standpoint that focuses on the everyday practices of leadership and includes moral, emotional, and relational aspects (Raelin, 2011).

From the leadership standpoint, the entity perspective focuses on interpersonal relationships of individuals. The relational perspective emphasises the “relating” and “relatedness,” i.e. the process itself. “The former focuses primarily on leadership in conditions of already “*being organized*” while the latter considers leadership as “*a process of organizing*” (Dachler in Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.664).

The most fundamental difference of these approaches lies on ontological assumptions. The relational approach flags for multiple realities constructed by the participants or observers. In the entity perspective, an objective truth is somewhere to be found. The role of the researcher is to uncover the facts of reality. This key difference is a starting point for understanding the process. Entity perspective refers to individuals as cognitivist units while relational perspective emphasises the local-historical context and individuals as interrelated units (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Table 3 sums up the differences between the approaches.

	Entity	Relational
Ontology	Realist *Views individuals in relationships as separate, independent bounded entities	Relational *All social realities, all knowledge of self and of other people and things are viewed as interdependent of co-dependent constructions existing and known only in relation
Approach to process	Cognitivist *Individuals performing internal cognitive operations to make sense of and understand how things really are	Constructionist *Person and context are interrelated social constructions made in ongoing local-cultural-historical processes
Approach to methodology	Views relating as an individual act *One way causal relations with feedback; basic unit of analysis individual	Assumes the primacy of relations *Focuses on communication as the medium in which all social constructions of leadership are continuously created and changed
Leadership view	Emphasises the importance of interpersonal relationships *Focuses primarily on leadership in conditions of already "being organised"	Emphasises the importance of "relating" and relatedness *Considers leadership as "a process of organising"

Table 3: Comparing entity and relational approaches (Uhl-Bien, 2006)

The strength of the relational approach lies in its wide understanding of leadership. It offers possibilities for complex phenomena like leadership instead of restricting them. Instead of aiming at objectivity, the relational perspective respects the space for local-historical contexts in leadership. This offers a total new window to reflect the international perspective of leadership from the "usable knowledge" perspective. But as Mary Uhl-Bien states, the entity approach and relational approach are seen as complementary to each other and not as opposite. For this reason the following part introduces the ideas of a framework for both perspectives. It will be called relational leadership theory.

3.4. Theoretical orientation

In relational constructionist perspective theory is actually not seen as a theory in its traditional sense. Theory is not the point nor is testing the theory. Rather, it is suggested to work as *“a way of orientation to practice – to ongoing relational processes and the ways the (re)construct particular relational realities”* (Hosking, 2011, p.463). **Research is seen more as a process of (re)constructing realities and relations.** The objects of research are the very processes themselves – the relational processes (Hosking, 2011).

Relational leadership theory is presented as an overarching framework for the entity and relational perspectives. It does not aim to unify the perspectives but to enable them to engage with each other and contribute to as well as advance relational research. Relational leadership is not a theory in its traditional sense, i.e. it does not offer a “ready organised” package. It is more an orientation, offering and opening new questions to be asked. Uhl-Bien argues that: *“(...) we hope to learn more about one of the most fundamental, but least understood, aspects of leadership: the relational dynamic of leadership and organizing”* (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.667).

The focus is on the relational **processes producing and enabling leadership**, not on the effectiveness of leadership. Whether the relational process is about leadership is understood through emerge of social order and change of approaches, attitudes, and goals. The general definition of relational leadership theory, applicable to both entity and relational perspectives is indicated

“(...) as a social influence process through which emergent coordination (i.e., evolving social order) and change (i.e. new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviours, ideologies, etc) are constructed and produced” (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.668).

A key question of RLT is: *“How do people work together to define their relationships in a way that generates leadership influence and structuring?”* (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.668). Uhl-Bien suggests further that relationships can be researched as outcomes or context for structuring. Relationships as outcomes focus on *“how leadership relationships are produced by social interaction”* (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.668). The structuring is a process itself, not a ready-made framework. In such research focus would be on *“how relational interactions contribute to the generation and emergence of social order?”* (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 670).

As stated earlier, the relational approach is more or less under development and research has just begun to orient itself towards it. Also criticism occurs. When changes are at the ontological and epistemological level, it is obvious that questions and critique serve as defence mechanisms. I would suggest curiosity and risk taking.

Another attempt to define a theoretical framework for leadership as a process is integral understanding of leadership originating from Küpers und Weibler. *“(...) an integral orientation considers that leadership research demand a comprehensive framework and multi-level approach suited for investigating the complex, interrelated processes involved”* (Küpers & Weibler, 2008, p.443). The framework suggests a constitutive linkage between leadership and followership and vice versa (Küpers, 2007). The framework has been applied originally from Koestlers’¹ holonic construct in which, for example, leaders and followers are considered simultaneously as wholes and as parts of a whole (organisations, economies, etc.) Its purpose is to study complex interrelated processes of leading and following.

Uhl-Bien and Ospina have developed their theoretical orientation further during the years. They have found support from advancing the interplay of paradigms instead of strengthening the “war” in the literature between the entity and relational perspectives (Romani & al., 2011). Paradigmatic interplay means respectful interaction between the different analyses in research context. *“Paradigm interplay recognizes the value of heterogeneous assumptions and insights from multiple perspectives for advancing understanding”* (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012, p.xxxi). But other opinions on relational leadership are also presented. In research critical voices must be also considered.

3.5. Discussion

The critical voices regarding relational leadership have come up with an idea that “anything goes” in the relational approach. This is what I call “paradigms talking.” The functionalist paradigm focuses on rational, logical objectivity, searching for one universal truth. In such a setting, notions of local-historical truths, ongoing dynamic processes, or the avoidance of subject-object construction as statements of post-modern discourse are flammable (Hosking, 1999; 2006).

Bradbury and Lichtenstein bring up the challenge of not being able to generalise in the relational approach. Especially in participatory research, the researcher and the very context play key roles and the question of validity contrasts with the traditional “outsider” role of the researcher. In the relational approach, the focus is in offering “usable knowledge” instead of calling for generalisation (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000). This notion refers also to the effectiveness of any act.

“(...) the effectiveness of any act of leading will be judged from within particular social and historical moments” (Ladkin, 2010, p.5).

¹ Koestler, 1967. The Ghost in the Machine

As noted earlier, relational, process-like thinking calls for a different kind of understanding of ontology and epistemology. The ongoing change, the process nature of being, and socially relationally produced knowledge is not conceived overnight. It is definitely an immense transformation of thinking.

With the following chapters, this research enlightens the social and relational world of leadership and takes part in the discussion on constructing leadership. I have chosen to approach leadership by using qualitative narrative methodology. To me narrative methodology offers a natural and verbally rich way of “diving” into the leadership phenomenon. It offers a way to handle, to accumulate, and to organise my textual empirics which reflect the everyday of leadership in various organisations simultaneously.

As language is a central function in the relational approach, the narrative approach also makes it a central element. The narrative approach aims, in particular, to serve the reader to identify him/herself with the everyday of leadership as authentically as possible. Thus this methodology serves just as one possible way to interpret the social processes of leadership. The relational approach views methodological choices openly.

With different empirics, participatory methods like ethnography or participatory observations could have served the purposes of this study (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000; Crevani & al., 2010). In that case I would have probably concentrated in one or two case organisations. The next chapter leads us first to the basics of the narrative world. It works as a justification of the methodology and as a key tool to the findings and contribution of this study. Let us now step into the flowing water of leadership by taking a look at the charm of narratives.

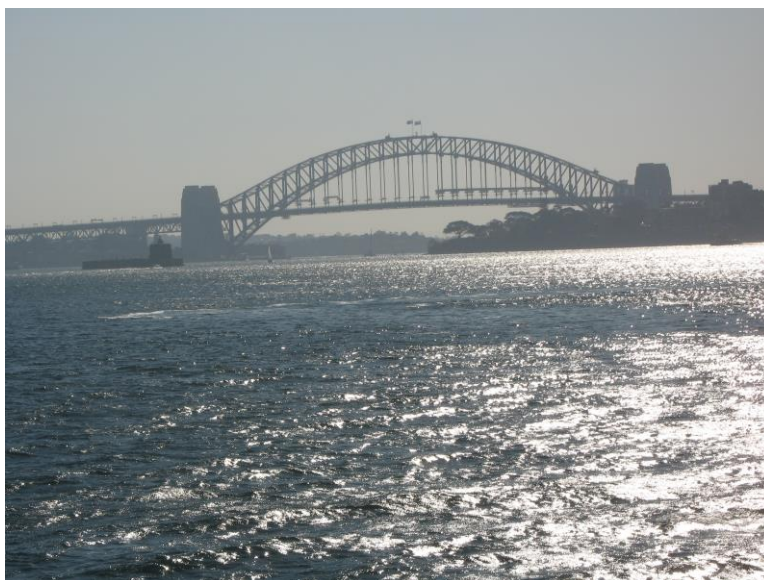


Figure 11: Relational understanding of leadership – space between.

4.

THE POTENTIALITY OF THE NARRATIVE – METHODOLOGICAL VIEWPOINT

“(...) we dream in narrative, day-dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative (...)” (Hardy in MacIntyre, 2007, p.211).

The potentiality of narratives lies on their familiarity as human activity. They are ubiquitous in everyday life. Telling narratives about the past seems to be a universal activity and one of the earliest ways to communicate (Riessman, 1993). They provide a framework for understanding past events and aiming at future action (Polkinghorne, 1988).

In this research narratives serve as empirical data and a methodological choice. In this chapter narratives are first discussed as they are defined in different ways and contexts and the possibilities of using them in scientific research. In the second part, narratives are discussed in the business research context. How has narrativity developed in business research? The last part of this chapter concentrates on explaining the connection between the narratives, the research, and the constructivism applied.

4.1. Narratives

The march of the narrative in the 80's, especially in social sciences, resulted from the “interpretative turn” in science (Riessman, 1993). In social sciences ‘narrative’ refers to a research approach which has its ontological and epistemological roots in social constructionism. The harnessing of narratives to scientific purposes is incisively described by Jerome Bruner, a narrative theorist, who writes that

“(...) narrative is a way of knowing that is different, but complementary to logical-scientific knowledge, which is the dominant form of knowing in our Western world” (Bruner in Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p.210).

Bruner continues by claiming that whereas logical-scientific knowledge searches for universal truth conditions, the narrative mode looks for particular connections between events (Polkinghorne, 1988). Czarniawska states that the use of narratives enriches organisation studies by “*complementing, illustrating and scrutinizing locigo-scientific forms of reporting*” (Czarniawska, 1998, pp.16 - 17). Hence, narrative knowing offers a choice and a supplement to the traditional scientific ways of knowing.

Further justifying the use of the narrative approach, this study leans on the developers of narrative approach (Clandinin and Conelly, Elliott, Riessman), who suggest that narratives are the oldest form of influence in human history and they represent the primary forms of communication between humans. Narratives give us the context and they are one of the fundamental means by which we organise, explain, and understand our life and social relations (Riessman, 1993; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Polkinghorne, 1988). In this research narratives aim to express the richer and thicker rhetoric when understanding and interpreting leadership. They serve as a bridge to the phenomenon.

Defining the concept ‘narrative’ is a complex task due to its multidisciplinary background and long history (Gabriel, 2000; Page, 2010). As a word, ‘narrative’ is often used synonymously with ‘story’ in everyday conversation (Riessman, 2008). The literature overview explicitly proves the “tug of war” between the two concepts. In the following main definitions commonly in use are reviewed and discussed.

The one extreme of the definitions is represented by literary theorist Roland Barthes, who claims that narratives are everywhere and everything is narrative:

“The narratives of the world are without number. In the first place the word “narrative” covers an enormous variety of genres which are themselves divided up between different subjects, as if any material was suitable for the composition of the narrative: the narrative may incorporate articulate language, spoken or written; pictures, still or moving; gestures and the ordered arrangement of all the ingredients; it is present in present in myth, legend, fable, short story, epic, history, tragedy, comedy, pantomime, painting,...stained glass windows, cinema, comic strips, journalism,, conversation. In addition, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; the history of narrative begins with the history of mankind; there does not exist, and never has existed, a people without narratives” (Barthes in Polkinghorne, 1988, p.14)².

Riessman (2008) complements the above list with memoir, biography, autobiography, diaries, archival documents, social service and health records, other organisational documents, scientific theories, folk ballads, photographs,

² Barthes, Ronald (1915-1980) was French researcher of literature and semiotic. (Wikipedia 2011)

and other works of art. I would complement these lists also with social media, such as facebook, twitter, and blogs. According to Barthes stories are parts of narratives (Gabriel, 2000).

Perhaps the most traditional way to define 'narrative' originates from Aristotle, who structured the narrative to include always a beginning, middle and an end. Also Labov and Waletzky define narrative through structure. They offer six categories: abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda. They also point out the importance of the chronological sequence of the narrative. *"The order of events moves in a linear way through time and the "order" cannot be changed without changing the inferred sequence of events in the original semantic interpretation"* (Labov & Waletzky in Riessman, 1993, p.17).

Polkinghorne argues that narrative is the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful. Narrative is a basis for linking individual actions and events into an understandable form. He juxtaposes stories and narratives. Narrative can refer to a process of making the story, to a cognitive scheme of the story, or to the result of the process (Polkinghorne, 1988). According to Czarniawska a narrative requires at least three elements. There must be an original state of affair, an action or an event, and a consequence. The interpretation of a narrative is situationally negotiated (Czarniawska, 1997; 1998).

Boje aims to strengthen story's position over narrative. The traditional view has always thought "less" of story. Story has been "folksy," without emplotment, simple chronological telling. Boje's backlash is the concept of 'antenarrative' (Boje, 2001; 2011).

"Antenarrative is the fragmented, non-linear, incoherent, collective, unplotted and pre-narrative speculation, a bet" (Boje, 2001, p.1).

"Story is a 'ante' state of affairs existing previously to narrative; it is in advance of narrative" (Boje, 2001, p.1).

Narrative is seen as a retrospective whereas antenarrative is attuned to future. (Boje, 2008) Boje argues that the postmodern world needs new approaches to analyse stories that are self-deconstructing, flowing, emerging, and networking: that are not static forms of narrating. Boje is joined by Georgakopoulou with a similar idea of the importance and actuality of not so "perfectly organised" stories in the postmodern world. She introduces the concept of "small stories," also called "snippets of talk," fleeting in a moment. The small stories as a concept cover the *"(...) gamut of under-represented narrative activities, such as telling of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also allusions to telling, deferrals of telling, and refusals to tell"* (Georgakopoulou, 2006, p.123).

Small stories are about very recent events, about this morning or last night. They are *"immediately reworked slices of life that arose out of a need to share*

with friends (...)” (Georgakopoulou, 2006, p.126). They are also about projected events of the near future.

According to Elliot narratives can be distinguished from discourse by three elements. Narratives are temporal, i.e. they have a beginning, middle, and an end. Secondly they are meaningful. They order events into a temporal sequence leading to conclusion. The third aspect is their social nature. Narratives are produced for a certain audience (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Gabriel argues that not all stories are narratives. He excludes particularly the fact-based and descriptive accounts of events aspiring at objectivity. Gabriel emphasises the emotional effect of stories.

“Stories are narratives with plots and characters, generating emotion in narrator and audience, through a poetic elaboration of symbolic material. This material may be a product of fantasy or experience, including an experience of earlier narratives. Story plots entail conflicts, predicaments, trials, coincidences, and crises that call for choices, decisions, actions, and interactions, whose actual outcomes are often at odds with the character’s intentions and purposes” (Gabriel, 2000, p.239).

Due to this variety of definitions, a researcher using narratives is challenged right from the beginning. Somehow the word ‘narrative’ has charmed me from the very beginning of this research and I will use it to highlight the importance of the narrative way of knowing in the postmodern era. In this narrative debate, I prefer to bind the concept to its “wide” definition covering “big and small.” I warmly welcome Gabriel’s thoughts of the emotionality of narratives. Good narratives include and give rise to emotions and feelings. They connect socially and give meaning to life. Ewick and Silbey sum this up: *“Narratives are fluid, continuous, dynamic, and always constructed interactively – with an audience and within a context – out of the stuff of other narratives”* (Ewick & Silbey in Gubrium & Holstein, 2009, p.185).

4.2. Narrative approach in business research

In business research the paradigmatic change from positivism to social constructionism paved way to different methodological choices (Koskinen & al., 2005; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The “narrative turn” as it is called, highlights a growing interest in narratives in research. In fact its power came from the simultaneous research interest and writings in different disciplines: *“The ecology of ideas shapes emerging paradigms based on a set of new, shared assumptions across different fields”* (Monteagudo, 2011, p.296).

Approaching methodologies used in business research, one runs into the problem of positioning leadership research and narrative approach in qualitative methodology. According to my understanding, narrativity does not have an independent discussion in leadership research as it does in

organisation research and many other disciplines. According to Denning the extremely extensive literature and research on leadership includes very few articles on storytelling and narrative inquiry (Denning in Klenke, 2008). Therefore it can be said that it has just caught on (Klenke, 2008). The methodological traditions of leadership research lie heavily in quantitative methodologies. According to the latest Handbook of leadership, qualitative methods include questionnaires, experiments, observations, interview, content analysis, discourse analysis, meta-analysis, and mixed methods, but not the narrative approach (Bryman, 2011). On the other hand, Collinson and Grint encourage researches to use diverse research methods when approaching the complex phenomenon of leadership.

“On our view the understanding of leadership is best enhanced by the encouragement of a diversity of theoretical positions and research method and the exploration of a great variety of research contexts and settings. Our vision is inclusive, not exclusive; one of radical heterogeneity, is not simply a different form of homogeneity” (Collinson & Grint, 2005, p.3).

Depending on the interpretation, leadership research can be discussed as a subsidiary area to organisation research in wide context (Parry, 2011). In order to get perspective, the narrative approach is viewed in this wide context and reflect the narrative approach in organisational research. The position of narratives in research has been – just like the position of followers – more in the background until the 80s and 90s.

“Once narratives were freed from their enslavement to facts, an immense new landscape for organizational research opened – a landscape dominated by linguistic structures and rhetorical tropes, in which a wide variety of entities previously thought of as solid facts, such as ‘organization’, ‘culture’, ‘commodities’, ‘the body’, meekly surrendered to being treated as texts” (Gabriel, 2000, p.5).

Each methodological approach has its own historical path towards the centre of the scientific world. So does the narrative approach. The arrival of the narrative approach to organisational and managerial theories can be traced back to the 1970s. Early research was committed to strengthening the methodological position of the narrative approach. These studies argued that instead of overlooking narratives as a source of data for organisational research purposes, the narrative approach should be valued as a proper enrichment of organisational research. By choosing the methodology, the researches (Mitroff and Kilmann) got access *“to the unconscious yet projective images of what the organization meant to the managers”* (Rhodes & Brorwn, 2005, p.169).

In the 1980s, in the wake of research on organisational culture and symbolism, the narrative approach took root and expanded. It developed rapidly and it drew its power from different disciplines like literature, social science, and philosophy (Rhodes & al, 2005; Koskinen & al., 2005; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). An important “next step” was the complementary add that

researchers were storytellers as well, not only the stories of organisation members were valid empirical material for research. The narrating of research became an issue. It has been said that narrative research has produced a rich body of knowledge unavailable through other methods and that it has reinvigorated organisational theory. Rhodes summarises the meaning of the narratives for research as multifaceted.

“(...) narratives are recognized not only as a form of data, but also as a theoretical lens, a methodological approach, and various combinations of these” (Rhodes & Brown, 2005, p.169).

The narrative approach has evolved into two main streams. The one could be seen as stream of “what are the narratives about” and the other as a stream of “what can we do with narratives.” They can be seen complementary to each other. The first stream focuses on constructing and analysing narratives from a structural standpoint, whereas the following stream, “organisational storytelling,” formulates the narratives as tools for organisational understanding and development (Riessman, 1993; Czarniawska, 1997; Boje, 2001). Narrative research has substantially contributed at least in five fields in organisation research: in sensemaking, communication, learning and change, politics and power, and identity and identification.

Sensemaking refers to a process of narrating (Rhodes & Brown, 2005). The actual story moment of its members, the performance, is a key to sensemaking in organisations to understand complex events (Boje, 1995). Weick argues that *“stories are pivotal to sensemaking because they aid comprehension, suggest a causal order for events, enable people to talk about absent things, act as mnemonics, guide action and convey shared values and meanings”* (Weick in Rhodes & Brown, 2005, p.170). In sensemaking, organisations are narratively constructed from networks of discussions.

In the communication perspective, stories are researched as frameworks for constructing reality in the organisation highlighting the temporal focus. Communication reflects the spectacle of the everyday, which is considered important. These everyday stories are subjective and inter-subjective accounts of everybody's experiences.

The field of change and learning also underlines temporality. Stories can be seen as powerful “media” for boosting change processes in organisations. Stories exist as bridges between change processes and understanding. On the other hand, people construct their own narratives about changes.

In the politics and power perspective *“narratives are regarded as a significant means by which organizations are discursively constructed and importantly, reconstructed as regimes of ‘truth’”* (Rhodes & Brown, 2005, p.174). Politics and power makes use of the plasticity and interpretative flexibility of narratives. In that game, narratives are a tool to present ideas differently to different audiences.

Identity and identification perspective suggests that identities of individuals are constituted via narration process. The most used thematic is self narratives. Organisational discussion has been further inspired by the idea that all members of an organisation may assume many possible identities and that the battle for dominance between them needs to be understood (Rhodes & Brown, 2005).

To sum up this brief introduction, main focus has been in temporal issues, i.e. the power of narratives originates from unfolding events over time. Another strength lies in the approach's processual characteristics. The approach offers also the possibility to different possible meanings – multiple voicing – which in my own reflecting reaches the highest scores (Rhodes, 2005; Boje 1995).

In business research different uses for the narrative approach have been outlined by Czarniawska. First way of entering business research can be called "tales from the field." It is organisational research written in a story form (case study). The second way of approaching is called "tales of the field." Its purpose is to collect and analyse stories of organisations told by organisation members, consumers, entrepreneurs, etc. The third variation is meant to conceptualise organisational life (managing, working, organising, etc.) as story making and the theories of business research as story reading. The fourth is called disciplinary reflection taking the form of literary critique; for example analysing the plot of a strategic management theory (Czarniawska, 1998; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Boje's version of the trends of organisational storytelling in business research outlines four different categories. First category is "stories out of their context." Stories are used to describe phenomena: for example organisation members expressing the organisation culture when having a formal meeting. The second approach to organisational stories is to study them in their performance context asking, for example, what the role of stories is in the organisation's change processes.

The third trend addresses the stories as practical tools to boost certain activities (marketing, strategy work, sales, etc.). A good example of this in practice is Gardner's and Laskin's study on great leaders throughout the history, where they conclude that storytelling has been one of their most reliable tools to inspire and that storytelling exists in all cultures (Gardner & Laskin, 1995). The fourth approach focuses on multiple interpretations and counter-narratives. Here marginalised voices are heard and put in focus (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Boje, 1995; 2008).

Through its short history, the narrative research approach has been characterised by an ongoing critical dialogue between science and narratives as a trustworthy source of data. The critique and suspicions fall on the power of interpretational understanding. There have been arguments regarding the roles of fact and fiction.

Choosing any method or approach, it is sensible to know its danger zones. The most critical zone is the selectivity of the researcher to reinforce certain

preconceived ideas. A continuous evidence-based discussion with the material is needed to avoid this danger. Another hazard is to consider narrative-based research outcomes as facts or the other way around; to consider everything is a narrative (Gabriel, 2000). Riessman highlights appropriateness and inappropriateness of the narrative approach by saying that

“Because the approach gives prominence to human agency and imagination, it is well suited to studies of subjectivity and identity. It is inappropriate for topics and theories in which the characteristics of actors as active subject remain unexplored or implicit (...)” (Riessman, 1993, p.5).

It has been suggested that in organisational theory, the research of organisational narratives has *“produced a rich body of knowledge unavailable through other methods of analysis”* (Rhodes & Brown, 2005, 168). It has opened a whole new way of knowing complementary to logical-scientific knowledge. In particular, complex phenomena like leadership call for diverse methods and diverse voices. I sum up by saying that the narrative approach has found a steady foothold in business research and this research will also do its own bit.

4.3. Narratives and this research

“For most people, storytelling is a natural way of recounting experience, a practical solution to a fundamental problem in life, or creating reasonable order out of experience” (Klenke, 20080, p.241).

The very basis of this study lies on personal documents of adult business students. They act as narrators of their own leadership realities of the 21st century. With permission, their personal essays on leadership are used for research purposes. As such, the essays are short narratives - like short glimpses of different kinds of experienced and well memorised leadership situations in organisations. The narrative approach serves here as a methodological choice to interpret the data. This means that narratives form both the source of the data and an outcome of the research. In the study, four narratives of leadership realities are created. With the help of the created narratives, this research aims to discern the process of leadership construction. The four categories represent “the four realms” of leadership revealed in this study.

It is also noteworthy that throughout this research I was searching for similar studies. However, a very few leadership studies done with the narrative approach use written source material. There is one study from the 1990s. Aaltonen studied Finnish leadership myths written by high school students in his dissertation. He studied student essays under the headline of “A Leader among the People” (Aaltonen, 1997). Also narrative analyses are still rare in leadership research. In Klenke’s book, *Qualitative research in the Study of*

Leadership, only five examples of narrative analysis are mentioned (Gabriel, Beech, Sims, Boudens, Bryant).

Gabriel illuminates followers' dominant fantasies about their leaders. Beech identified narrative styles of managers and workers based on their stories. Sims conducted interviews with middle managers, examining the stories they tell to other organisational participants. Boudens focused on workplace emotions and Bryant studied employee responses to, for example, organisational change. This still remains very little of research using narrative analysis in the gigantic leadership research arena (Klenke, 2008).

The potentiality of the narrative world *"lies not in the facts, but in the meaning"* (Gabriel, 2000, p.4). One of the meanings lies in their characteristic way to help understand and identify. The Aristotelian way to interpret the same is *"that stories make it possible for us to share our world"* (Hatch & al., 2006, p.51). Aaltonen and Heikkilä capture the essential by saying that *"It seems, that there is something special in this time, which calls for seeking solutions in narratives"* (Aaltonen & Heikkilä, 2003, p.15). And Polkinghorne says that *"narrative is the linguistic form uniquely suited for displaying human existence as situated action"* (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.7).

In this qualitative research, the narratives and their language have empowered me like numbers have empowered quantitative researchers. The charm of the narrative is at the same time its challenge. Even though narratives are a very natural form to human beings, they also require a many-sided understanding of the complex phenomenon. Ricoeur says: *"stories are linguistic expressions of this uniquely human experience of the connectedness of life"* (Ricoeur in Polkinghorne, 1995, p.7).

Accepting and searching for multiple voicing, such as narrative knowing of leadership in the 21st century, enriches and enlarges our sight of leadership experienced. As narratives construct our reality, they also construct this research by bridging thoughts into an understanding. As an interesting association in this research, followers and narratives have both had an intricate path to become parts of the leadership discussion. They both have been under suspect but "freed" and accepted as central elements of the phenomenon.

Summing up the chapter, this research leans on the social constructionist paradigm which underlines and highlights that interaction and linguistics form existence. From the epistemological point of view, narrative knowing arises and supports social constructionism in which objective truth is rejected. The human way to "deal with the world" does not work sentence by sentence. Instead, we frame in larger structures (Bruner, 1990 in Polkinghorne, 1995). And this is where narratively constructed wholes come into the picture to bridge meaning (Polkinghorne, 1995). With narratives, we are indeed making sense of the surrounding world. For most people narrative form is a natural and practical solution of creating an order out the experiences (Moen, 2006). As Barthes points out; people without narratives do not exist (Barthes in Polkinghorne, 1988).



Figure 12: Narratives bridging the meanings

5.

CONDUCTING RESEARCH

This chapter traces back and explains the research I have done. It is actually a narrative in itself. Reading dissertations with natural history part I became convinced that narrative forms the foundations for the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. It is the path the researcher has gone throughout the study with all the ups and downs of doing scientific research. It also paves the way to the actual review of the trustworthiness of this research.

5.1. Natural history

Natural history represents the personal route of the researcher through the whole research process. It should work as a key to engage the readers to your thinking and action path. Silverman describes a natural history of the research as an act, where

“(...) one offers the reader ‘field notes’ about the developments of one’s thinking” (Silverman, 2005, p.306).

By writing a natural history, a researcher will be more likely to turn readers into “insiders” by inviting them to meet his/her thinking process throughout the study (Silverman, 2005). Personally I have always found these parts very inspiring. Being able to identify yourself with the researcher’s path and thoughts during the research serves also as an evaluation criteria for reader (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). When the natural history is missing, especially when reading doctoral theses, I always find myself wondering jealously whether everything was so clear and easy all the way through. By describing the ups and downs of the research, the line of thought becomes explicit. It is

extremely interesting to get to know the path of the research all the way from the first ideas up to the conclusions.

Relational constructionism also offers a viewpoint to whether a natural history is needed in the research. Hosking says that *“the social processes of the research become interesting in themselves (...) The research process can be viewed as a way of ‘going on’ in relation, constructing knowledge, doing things, and socially validating them as e.g., good, relevant, and useful (...)”* (Hosking, 1999, p.123). In this view researcher becomes an obvious element of the research process. Natural history belongs to the process and justifies itself in relational thinking.

5.1.1. First there was the empirical material

I would like to argue that I unconsciously started the study even before I knew I would start doing research. There was actually something before my empirical material. My deep interest in leadership issues as a leadership teacher led me to the world of personal written essays as a learning method in leadership courses. I soon realised and experienced from students that leadership issues were not commonly and naturally talked or written about anywhere in organisations. For many this was the first time they ever reflected back to leadership issues. In one essay a student wrote that she did not know that she was even allowed to reflect these matters. I call this the *phase-0*, the emerging of issues and reflecting of thematic before the actual research process (Auvinen, 2012).

I started working with adult BA students in 2006 in my leadership course. The adult students, working fulltime during the day and studying in the evenings, were asked to write an essay under the topic was *“Leadership in the 21st century – my own experiences”* and bring it with them to the first lecturers. In the orientation day for the first year students they were instructed to read at least two books and include their own experiences of practiced leadership in everyday interaction in their essays.

After reading these thirty first round essays, I was confused about everything concerning leadership. Confused a little because the literature flagged for shared leadership, coaching, and other participating models and the essays talked in a different language. Confused massively of the intensive and sensitive way of writing. Confused because my own experiences as a “follower” were different at first sight. Had I been wrong teaching leadership or was my world too idealistic and romanticised? This confusion, for its own part, made me want more.

After the third round of reading the essays, I found myself asking seriously whether these rich and wide written experiences and perceptions of leadership reality would be useful for research purposes. When getting the “green light” from professors I decided to dig into this material and start as a researcher. A very big decision was made.

First I was concerned about ethical issues. There was an urgent need to ask for permission from the students for the use of these essays in research. I used email, sending them a very simple question whether I could use the essays for research purposes. After the fourth round of data gathering in 2009, I had hundred essays in my hands. I only got two negative answers meaning that 98 essays were allowed to use for research purposes. I also got many encouraging messages to continue with this important thematic. So I had the material, the essays, and my pre-understanding of the confusing phenomenon of leadership. I formed the first question: what did the students experience when they were talking about leadership in everyday working life.

To put it briefly, the empirical data of this research is based on 98 essays written by adult BA students at Tampere University of Applied Sciences during the years 2006 – 2009. The topic of the essays was *“Leadership in the 21st century – my own experiences”*. The essays were written before the classes started. Reading books was also included in the essays.

As mentioned earlier, reading the essays and discussing with students in class, I always got a strong feeling that, for these people, writing about leadership was something very unique. I also got a strong feeling that many of them got the possibility to express something that was not officially allowed before. Their opinions regarding their organisations’ leadership issues had not been discussed seriously. Leadership as a subject also seemed to be frightening. The students wrote these essays knowing and trusting that no-one but the teacher would read them. The promise for secrecy was the key element for them to write their essays openly.

5.1.2. Then came followers

As every researcher, I started the research by reading articles and earlier research. At first, to my surprise and disappointment, the literature highlighted the overflowing amount of leadership research and warned “Do not enter” or “Nothing new to be found.” Despite all warnings of literature and some colleagues, my lifelong interest, confusion, and strong belief in my research data encouraged me still to follow the path of leadership research.

During the literature review on leadership it was soon clear that leadership had been equal to a leader, i.e. far too one-sided. Research about followers as parts of the leadership phenomenon was mostly based on attributive models describing ideal conditions and relationships. To me they sounded like wish lists of something that never landed in everyday work. At least this had to be found out. Followers as equals, serious parts of constructing leadership were obviously a minor concern. Understanding leadership as a social construction of leaders and followers convinced me of the importance of choosing followers as a standpoint for this study. It took me first to a historical voyage of the followers’ story. Looking through the historic lens offered a lesson of how concepts like ‘follower’ live and change in time.

5.1.3. About the adult students

At this point a little background data of the essay writers is offered. The common denominator for the focus group is that they are adult BA degree students working at the same time. According to House and Aditya, 98 % of the empirical evidence of leadership research is American in its origin. (Bryman, 2004). These alerting figures encouraged me to use Finnish empirical material in this research. I have chosen Finnish adult students as the focus group and context.

It is worth mentioning that the focus group members have work experience between 5 and 30 years. Their age vary from ca. 25 to 55 years. 23 % of the focus group members are men. Table 4 provides a rough understanding of their occupations: they are mostly office workers and salespersons from various sectors.

Occupation	Number
Entrepreneur	3
Expert	6
Team leader	16
Office worker	47
Salesperson	11
Worker	2
Not identified	13
TOTAL	98

Table 4: Occupational diversity of the focus group.

5.1.4. Searching of theory

I had not experienced major “downs” until I started to turn my thoughts into theory. Academic world had always taught me that “you must have theory first.” I did not. Perhaps the logic of deduction as a form of achieving scientific knowledge was haunting in my mind. I felt myself “naked” and frustrated. But I also knew that there was only one way out – searching and reading.

At this point the e-library world fully served my needs and is to be thanked for its convenience. This part of the research was like slowly climbing the mountain; reading and rejecting. I now realise that due to the enthusiasm for my data, the inductive knowledge process actual started from the empirical material, not from a theoretical standpoint. Induction means that the researcher proceeds from empirics to theoretical results (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The purpose of this “searching” mode is now crystal clear.

I had to properly hijack the area of scientific leadership research. It lasted throughout the whole writing process.

I did collide to the theoretical frame, relational leadership as a process through working at the same time with the analysis. In many books and articles they used the concept of “rethinking leadership” in the context of understanding leadership as a relational process (Ladkin, 2010; Hay, 2006). I had collided to something which was not yet researched too much and other researchers (e.g. Hosking, Uhl-Bien, Ladkin, Bradbury, and Lichtenstein) were encouraging new researchers to take part. It wasn’t and still isn’t a ready-made theory to be tested. It refers more to an orientation leaving space for each researcher. These basic assumptions of relational leadership were suitable and intriguing for this study.

5.1.5. Analysing phase

At the same time as I searched for appropriate theory I was anxious to become acquainted with empirical data. I immersed myself in “listening” to these essay stories of leadership, asking simple questions like what are they talking about. I did thematic analysis of all the material. This will be explained more detail in Chapter 6. It was very satisfactory pure handwork in between reading and searching for the theory. The feeling of achieving something, of moving forward, was very important.

At this point good advice from my Professor was to reduce the amount of essays to one third. It was another reading of the data to cut down the number of essays. I chose the 30 essays having the “richest” in descriptions of authentic leadership experiences. But these many readings of the empirical data paid off – suddenly the essays were talking to me! Different categories began to crystallise. The data turned to colourful stickers categorising the small stories in the essays. This intensive work with the data was preparation for writing the narratives of each category. But then I became horrified of writing. I had all those rules of scientific writing and of good narratives in the head. I felt imprisoned by those rules. This had to do with the unconscious ontological and epistemological hurricane in my head: the old paradigm against the new – objectivism against subjectivism. Good advice was needed. I followed the advice of “just” writing and letting go.

Determinedly I reserved a week for writing the narratives. In the evening of the fourth day I had written eight narratives, two in each category. Narratives became glimpses of the everyday, written in the followers’ voice talking to the reader personally as if the readers would sit in front of the narrator. I call them realms and named them Excellence, Balance, Quasi, and Anarchy. I must admit I was very satisfied with myself that very evening. I had just let it go. These four days were the most creative and artistic phases in the study.

After a couple months of intensive creating of the narratives, I was able to continue with the analysis of the narratives (details in Chapter 6). At this point

there was a need to go back to the research questions. I realised that the construction of leadership was the “thing.” How is leadership constructed? Contrasting the narratives with each other was a solution at this stage.

Becoming acquainted with Beech’s six factor model and convinced about its suitability, it ended up as the next stage of the analysis. The further frame of analysis was driven from the original thematic analysis, in which I had formed meta themes of the follower narratives and which at the original context didn’t work. They were used here as core constructs of leadership processes and then contrasted with different narratives again. This analysis process was not a straight forward act. It was formed over a longer period of time. But in this context the time serves as a maturing process of thoughts and writing. This is what research is all about, I think.

I had to tower above the narratives to step further. Czarniawska’s states to the point that *“the difficulty lies not in getting in, but in getting out – physically and mentally”* (Czarniawska, 1998, p.40). Indeed, I needed to get out of my narratives. At this point “wise” discussions and feedback in conferences and seminars was necessary. This phase required a lot of patience and long walks. I was constantly asking myself “what is this all about?” and “now what?” But I have been taught to trust the process. This in mind the phenomenon started to reveal the more abstract side of itself. I had somehow reached my destination.

5.1.6. Research process as a whole

“Rather than viewing the research process as what mediates between theory (input) and data (output) it can be treated as interesting in its own right – both as vehicle for knowing and that which is to be understood” (Hosking, 2000, p.155).

I could not agree more with Dian Marie Hosking. When stepping into a scientific research process such as a doctoral study, I suppose most researchers have quite a realistic picture of its demanding nature and the huge amount of work. The nature of scientific research is well documented and strongly respected. But I don’t think many of us have any idea what else does doing research mean. On the other hand, I wouldn’t have believed anybody, even if I had been told. I think it is worth explaining because its joint effect is immense.

Personally the first concrete challenge and victory at the same time has been writing in English. It has been a process of taking the bull by the horns, and has led to a wider and fearless language reserve. Another personal surprise has been the intensiveness of the whole process. I never thought “being present” but in fact “not being present” would relate to me. The most wonderful and thought-provoking aspect has to do with the whole new world of thinking and knowing. It is impossible to explain in a few words. It is something that has to do with becoming something that you were not before.

Referring to the research as a means of knowledge, I agree with Keith Grint who has stated that before you start to do research, you think you know quite a lot of the thematic. In a short while you realise how little you know. “*This was partly to do with Socratic problem: the more I read, the more I realized how ignorant I was*” (Grint, 2001, p.1). This is the most “hooking” effect of the whole research process.



Figure 13: Natural history of the research - the path of the researcher

5.2. Trustworthiness of the research

Evaluating qualitative research refers to the quality and trustworthiness of the study. The justification of research is “new knowledge” (Koskinen & al., 2005). The purpose of narrative research is not to offer universal truths, but to serve the scientific world with one version of it from a specific point of view. Qualitative research operates with interpretations of the researched phenomena meaning that another researcher could interpret in a different way. In qualitative research underlining subjectivist epistemology and relativist ontology of multiple realities, evaluation criteria must be different compared to quantitative research and positivist objectivist settings (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Traditionally research has been evaluated as regards its reliability, validity. Reliability refers to the consistency of measured procedure to ensure that other researchers would come up with same findings. The other “classic”

criteria, validity stands for the extent to which conclusions and findings give an accurate explanation of what has been done. Because these criteria were originally developed for quantitative research, their interpretation in qualitative research has slightly changed. Validity, for example, has turned to a means of guaranteeing the correctness of the report (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Koskinen & al., 2005).

Another way to evaluate a qualitative study is to adopt different criteria developed specifically for qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced the concept “trustworthiness” to replace validity and reliability. Trustworthiness consists of four aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility asks whether the researcher is familiar with the topic and the data is sufficient to claim something. It also speculates whether it is possible for another researcher to come “close” to your findings or not.

Transferability refers to connections between your research and previous research. Dependability informs the reader of the research process; of its logic, documentation, and traceability. Confirmability is about linking findings and interpretations back to research data in such a way that can be understood by other readers. It removes the possibility that the interpretation is just imagination (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

This research evaluates trustworthiness and its four criteria, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To find the way to construct the leadership phenomenon in the context of followers, the follower path is first studied through historical lenses, then through organisational and leadership lenses. The data has been gathered throughout a period of four years (2006–2009), each year a group of thirty people writing. For the actual analysis, the data was reduced for research and analysis purposes to 30 essays. From this data the realms were narrated. Whether someone else would interpret the data with similar ideas remains a mystery. Riessman challenges this part by asking “*can one tell a better one from a worse one?*” (Riessman, 1993, p. 64). To me this is the “artistic” part of interpretative scientific research and it leaves much room for the audience of the research. Success depends on “*the analysts capacity to invite, compel, stimulate or delight the audience (...) not on criteria of veracity*” (Gergen, 1985 in Riessman, 1993, p.66).

What comes to previous research of relational nature, the fact is that such research has not spread wide yet. The relational orientation has been introduced by many writers (e.g. Hosking, Ladkin, Uhl-Bien, Ospina, Collinson), but empirical research done in the relational frame is still rare. A few such studies are introduced in Chapter 3. The confirmability aspect can be judged through the four narratives constructed on the basis of the essays. The contents of the narratives are strictly from the essays. The narratives are also clarified in the form of core contexts and direct quotations later in the study. The main reason for writing the natural history (Chapter 5.1) was to serve the evaluative purposes in qualitative research. It is supposed trace back the research process in order to confirm and clarify the dependability

criteria of trustworthiness. It has been written throughout the entire research process in order to avoid too much memorising.

5.3. Emerging of narratives

The empirical material consists of the essays about leadership in the 21st century. Those essays consist intrinsically of short narratives. They are reconstructions of experienced leadership in a written form. Organising these textual narratives through qualitative, narrative methodology to coherent units, I have first chosen to use thematic analysis. Before the actual analyses, I will first use a few words regarding textual data.

5.3.1. Orientation to analysis

In qualitative research, the distinction between fact and specimen perspectives is fundamental. In the fact perspective, the researcher focuses on finding the truth of the reality. In the specimen perspective, truth is not the essential question. Instead, the researcher organises and categorises data and offers various interpretations (Alasuutari, 1999; Koskinen & al., 2008). In this study, the specimen perspective is a natural choice.

“In the interpretative approach, the text is considered subjective, the role of the researcher is that of an insider, and the research method focuses on cultural influences of the text” (Kovalainen & Eriksson, 2008, p.91).

In narrative research, there is very little consensus about the way analysis is done (Klenke, 2008; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Each narrative inquiry must be guided in its own context and research questions. Perhaps the most traditional way to start analysing narratives is to make a distinction between analysis of narratives and narrative analysis. Donald Polkinghorne (1995) refers to the theory of analysis and presents this distinction, attaching the former to paradigmatic cognition type and the latter to the narrative cognition type of analyses (Bruner, 1986 in Polkinghorne, 1995). In analysis of narratives representing paradigmatic cognition, a researcher uses different techniques to analyse common themes, plots, structures, and story types of stories told by people. The database commonly consists of several stories already in a story form. Polkinghorne divides the analysing process further into two categories: 1) analysis derived from previous theories and 2) analysis inductively derived from the data. In addition to describing of categories this form of analysis notes the relationships between different categories (Polkinghorne, 1995).

In narrative analysis the researcher searches for some more or less consistent events, happenings, and actions from different sources of data. Then the elements are put together as a coherent story or stories. The

outcomes are typically stories of historical account, a case study, a life story, or an episode from a person's life. Narratives are then interpreted and discussed. This kind of analysis resembles police investigations or biographies heading from bits and pieces into a complete, plotted story. In these types of analyses, data elements are not usually in a story form (Polkinghorne, 1995; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The analysis of narrative moves from stories to common elements and narrative analysis moves from elements to stories (Polkinghorne, 1995).

Reporting narratively is characteristic to narrative analyses. The essays were partly already in narrative form. The analysis proceeded through a thematic categorisation process. This all refers to analyses of narratives. These categories then became enlivened in four different 'narratives' in order to discuss their relationships. This study is thus more an analysis of narratives. This view is confirmed with the form of the enlivened categories. They can be characterised more as scenes as pure narrative with beginning, middle, and temporality (Polkinghorne, 1988; 1995).

Another categorisation (by Mishler) of exploring narrative data refers to four elements of focus: meaning, structure, interactional context, and performance. Meaning focuses on the content of narrative asking what is told. Structure focuses on narrative devices and structural and linguistic elements asking respectively how the story is told. Interactional context has its focus on dialogical co-production of the narrative in context and asks how somebody tells the story to another person in a specific context. Performance focuses (by Riessman) in telling the stories through words, gestures, silences, tracings, and images and asks how the story is told in order to achieve the specific outcome (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Riessman, 2008). From this categorisation the data is approached by focusing on meaning. Thematic analysis is used as a first step to analyse the essays.

In the narrative approach, thematic analysis has at least two separate functions. One is to choose any empirical data, examine the themes, and organise them into meaningful narratives. The constructor of the narrative is the researcher and the construction is a central element of the research. Another meaning would be to use the narratives as told or written by research participants and examine the patterns of themes (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Riessman, 1993). The former choice was 'my way' of doing narrative analysis and I call it "reconstruction" process. I reconstruct by putting small similar kind of pieces of stories from different essays together, ending up with four categories.

Doing thematic analysis has its limitations. The challenge lies in making sure everyone understands the thematic categorisations in a similar fashion. Similarly the role of the researcher tends to remain obscure. How does the researcher shape the data? This may not be as obscure in written data than in interview data (Riessman, 2008). Before going into the thematic analysis, I describe the textual data in a few words.

5.3.2. Textual data

As mentioned earlier, the whole premise of doing this research was the rich written data. The essays felt so natural and tempting in my hands. There were not written for research purposes. Originally the essays were written in a study context as confidential material only read by the teacher. Textual data is often used for background purposes and interviews are considered as a main resource. In this research textual data is used as a primary resource. In scientific literature this kind of textual material is categorised as autobiographical writing or personal narrative (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Riessman, 2008; Polkinghorne, 1988). In this case the essays represent personal narratives regarding leadership experiences. According to Silverman the possibilities of textual data relies on four aspects: richness, relevance and effect, natural occurrence, and availability (Silverman, 2011).

The advantages of textual data:

1. Richness – Close analysis of written texts reveals presentational subtleties and skills.
2. Relevance and effect – Texts influence how we see the world and the people in it and how we act.
3. Naturally occurring – Texts document what participants are actually doing in the world – without being dependent on being asked by researchers.
4. Availability – Texts are usually readily accessible and not always dependent on access or ethical constraints. (Silverman, 2011)

To my best understanding, written data in the essay form is quite rare in leadership research. Aaltonen has used high school students' writings in researching Finnish leadership myths (Aaltonen, 1997). From the perspective of individuals, textual data requires more effort to produce. On the other hand, writing offers a chance to reflect on complex and delicate phenomena like leadership in one's own peace and at one's own pace. There is always a possibility that something is left "out" deliberately or because the researcher is not facilitating the situation (Aaltonen & Heikkilä, 2003). The textual richness of these essays has convinced me of their appropriateness for research purposes and now they are put under thematic analysis.

5.3.3. Thematic analysis

The focus of thematic analysis lies exclusively in content. Firstly, to be able to outline the content of the narratives, I decided to face the simple question of what is told in the narratives (Riessman, 2008). I studied this data (98 essays), giving each essay a number and begun to search for themes that described the leadership actions practiced in daily interaction. This time consuming process was put in the form of a table, giving each theme a name and a colour. Several themes could be found in one essay. The following findings are not in any special order. The markings were organised into ten different themes.

- Becoming a leader
- Non-leadership
- Communications
- Problem solving skills
- Moodiness
- Bossing
- Feedback
- Development discussions
- Leadership education
- Friendship

To be able to get a better understanding of the thematic categorisation, some examples of the themes are brought up. In all themes “good and bad” are found.

Becoming a leader describes the possible ways one can become a leader in an organisation. It includes stories of leaders who are “pulled” out of the follower group, stories where becoming a leader is a price of excellent work done, and stories of leaders who are forced to become a leader or those who are really interested in their new job.

Non-leadership consists of stories where leading is described as an act done “if there is time.” The “real” job, for example sales, has to be done first. Leading people is considered to be an ineffective use of time.

Communications stories divide most clearly into good and bad stories. In negative stories no meetings are organised or meetings exist, but the leader is not taking part in them. In positive stories the leader asks a lot of questions, listens to followers, and organises meetings regularly.

Problem solving skills stories are about “sweeping the problems under the carpet.” Leaders do not dare to handle problems. Moodiness consists of stories, where an organisation is led by someone whose daily mood is at the

center of work. Bossing stories are dealing with the “old” way of leading: command and control.

In feedback stories lack of feedback is dominant or it is not done in an authentic way. Development discussion stories vary from “used as a tool to understand strategies” to “must be done” stories. In Leadership education stories followers describe the thematic wondering whether leaders must take part in leadership courses to be able to work as a leader. In opposite stories followers hope that their leaders could or should take part in leadership education. In the last category of friendship, leaders are considered to act as friends of the followers. In those stories friendship tells about existing favouring systems. On the other hand stories of impartial leaders are told.

The second intention was to categorise these 10 themes into a smaller amount of more abstract phenomena in order to see the “big picture” and to be able to form the narratives. They are called at this point meta themes and the process revealed four of them. The first meta theme is **professionalism**. That covered the themes of how someone becomes a leader, how leadership actions are not taken seriously, and leadership education. The second is **behaviour**. They had to do with the behavioural aspects of the leader. This covers the themes like moodiness, bossing, and friendship. The third meta theme found was **development**, covering the themes of feedback and development discussions. The fourth meta theme, **expression**, includes the way of communication and problem solving. Table 5 illustrates the meta themes.

Themes/Discourses	Professionalism	Behaviour	Development	Expression
Becoming a leader	X			
Non leadership	X			
Communicating				X
Problem solving				X
Moodiness		X		
Bossing		X		
Feedback			X	
Development Discussions			X	
Leadership education	X			
Friendship		X		

Table 5. Thematic analysis and meta themes

Despite all the efforts and thinking I could not form the narratives using the meta themes. They just did not “talk” at this point. Instead, I was able to

“recycle” them in my analysis as core constructs of the leadership phenomenon.

5.3.4. Constructing realms

It became clear that the data was too large for deeper analysis. It seemed to be impossible and impractical to handle 98 essays, each having 6–7 pages. At this point the reduction process was natural to carry out. As a result of the process, the essays were downed to one third by choosing the essays having the widest descriptions of authentic examples of leadership. The research data now consisted of 30 essays. To clarify the further reading of the analysis, I did not number the essays again. That is ways quotations from essays have numbers from 1- 98.

Concentrating on the “little” data at this point, I started to ask myself about the differences and similarities between the essay stories. What makes one narrative differ from another? At this point the answer came almost automatically. This exploration clarified two main categories of realms. Either the narrators were expressing **satisfactory leadership practices** or they were expressing **non-satisfactory leadership practices**.

With these two styles in mind the data was studied with new lenses in order to find “sub-categories” of the non-satisfactory and satisfactory leadership experiences. During the categorisation process I also came intuitively to the idea of coining these categories as realms. At this point realms represent the different realities of leadership I was about to describe. The authorisation for the term ‘realm’ came then later from Polkinghorne. In his texts he refers to realms as different realities of human life. He quotes that *“human existence consists of a stratified system of differently organized realms of reality (...)”* (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.1). It is a term, which helped visualise the invisible phenomena.

First, I came up with the idea of **“quasi” realm**. In those narratives the writers felt that leadership was not taken very seriously and they did not feel respected. The second idea was the **“balance” realm**. In balance realm the situation was opposite to the “quasi” realm. They felt themselves respected and that the practiced leadership was carried out with serious interest on leadership.

Interpreting the narratives, I could recognise two more realms, which had differences to previous ones: “anarchy” and “excellence” popped up. In **“anarchy” realm**, little hope was seen in leadership actions. Words describing this style could be total unpredictability, stagnation, chaos. On the other hand, I had some markings in the balance realm expressing energy and sense of togetherness, caring, and energy. I named this **realm “excellence”**. The march of these four different realms of leadership out of the follower narratives was so powerful and clear that the actual writing process of those narratives reminded me of saying: *‘an artist never paints the picture twice.’*

Figure 14 illustrates the structure of conducting the four narratives, the realms of leadership.

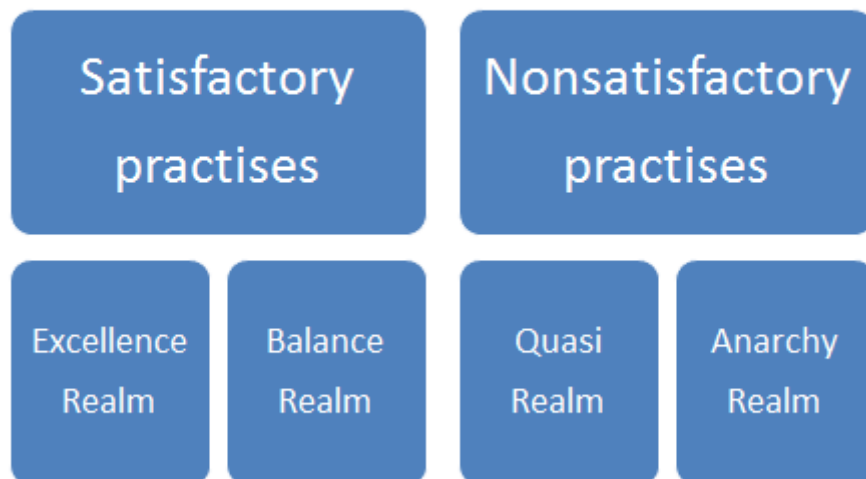


Figure 14. Structure of the realm construction as a process

The careful conducting of the narratives has been the body of this research. How were these four narratives put together? I went through each essay categorising the experiences of the student essays in these four categories. This formed the basic foundation of the narratives. Putting together the four narratives I then used the meta themes as elements of each category. For example the Quasi narrative consists of the markings alike from all essay material. All told experiences are authentic from essays. In short the thirty essays grew to four narratives representing the realms with the help of the meta themes condensed from the thematic analyses.

This chapter has described the “becoming” of this research from empirical data to four separate narratives. In the following chapter, the meaning of the realms in relational leadership will be opened up and the narratives themselves will be presented for interpretation. In next chapter the narratives are talking.

6.

NARRATIVES TALKING – FOUR REALMS OF LEADERSHIP

If the conducting process is the body of this research, the narrative talking is its heart. The results of using narrative methodology with this empiric material will “take off” in this chapter. First of all, this chapter distinguishes narrative inquiry from the other research approaches. Narrative reports need to be told “*with passion and excitement, with a taste of life and emotion*” (Ellis in Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p.223). I first explain the meaning of the realms of leadership in the context of relational leadership. Then the four different realms of leadership are presented. After telling these narratives, the research continues by contrasting these four narratives by using the so-called ‘six-factor analysis’ in order to open up the differences and describing them more thoroughly. The journey continues by contemplating the leadership phenomenon in the light of core constructs derived from the essays. The last part of the analysis discusses the spaces between the different realms.

6.1. Narratives as leadership processes

“In contrast to work done out of other social science perspective, “theory” testing, nor is knowing what is or was the case. Rather, I suggest that relational constructionism be thought of as a way of orienting to practice” (Hosking, 2011, p.463).

The focus of this research is the journey through the processes of momentary leadership phenomena in which “*leadership is going on*” (Wood, 2005). As stated earlier, leadership is a complex phenomenon surrounded by various attempts to define it. As Cooper puts it: “*Leadership is found neither in one*

term or the other, but in 'the point of difference', at which each turns around the other" (Cooper in Wood, 2005, p.7). Leadership cannot simply be determined at one particular point or another. Rather, it is consistently flow and continuously emerging from those processes "in' the 'between' of points" (Wood, 2005, p.7). Realms describe the processes of momentary, scenery-like leadership. In every realm several moments and sceneries are described. As a limitation of this taxonomy of four realms, Excellence, Balance, Quasi and Anarchy can be regarded they general nature leaving space interpretation.

The four created narratives, the realms, are the key to this research: How is leadership constructed? How are these narratives able to reveal the construction processes of leadership? In order to "conquer" the world of relational processes of leadership, the most natural way seemed to be to write narratives of different leadership processes. I agree here with Polkinghorne's thoughts:

"I have argued that human beings exist in three realms – the material realm, the organic realm, and the realm of meaning. The realm of meaning is structured according to linguistic forms, and one of the most important forms for creating a meaning in human existence is the narrative" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.183).

After a very careful classification of the research material, eight small narratives, two of each category were created, describing the processes of leadership. Narratives are categorised as: Excellence, Balance Quasi, and Anarchy. Each category consists of examples collected from different essays describing leadership. These realms explicit the momentary processes of leadership. They are written in a "follower voice," i.e. the narrator has taken the follower position. The different realms form a chain of moments in an indeterminate order between which the leadership process fluctuates. The translation of the original text is primarily done by the author.

Excellence realm describes the reality in which leadership meets all the expectations and dreams of the followers. Leadership in Excellence realm is joyful, empowering and "one for all - all for one" activity. The leadership as such is a comprehensive phenomenon where individuals are not just "working beings" but rather embodiments of a certain wholeness. The atmosphere of this reality is positively charged and satisfactory.

Balance realm is also positively charged but its embodiment is more moderate and muted than in Excellence. In the Balance reality, leadership emanates harmony and order. Everything is in its place. Everybody knows what to do. Leadership is based on democratic principles. "We" together are the leadership reality. People together make things happen.

Quasi is a realm in which "we" exists only in official statements as a ceremonial element. In everyday leadership reality, followers and leaders are separate monuments, whose relationship is filled with guessing and lack of interest in each other. The leadership reality is based on confusing principles

favouring part of the followers and leaving the other part without attention and care. In the Quasi realm, the leadership reality reflects a negatively charged atmosphere in which Shakespeare's question "to be, or not to be" is present.

Anarchy is a leadership reality in which fear is present at every moment. Anything can happen. Being continuously on the lookout is necessary. In this chaotic disorder, a part of the leader role appears to be hijacked by random groups. Some members of the community don't care anymore while others still use their energy covering up the despotic nature of this horror play.

These four narratives are written in spoken language and told in the voice of the follower. To get the most out of these realms, I wish the reader could imagine him/herself sitting in front of the narrator and taking part in a little chat in a coffee table. I want to highlight that the gender issue is not present in these narratives. The original adult student essays are written in the Finnish language, written and spoken, a gender of a person is not necessarily identifiable. In some narratives, I couldn't identify the gender so I decided to choose it randomly. Gender issues are not a part of this research. The narratives have been written in English language by me as a researcher.

Each narrative is also illustrated first with a picture. The picture is meant to function as an appetiser and an orientation for the reader to move from one realm to another. They are supposed to work as metaphors for each realm. So my second wish is that the reader stops for a little moment in front of each picture and visualises what is coming next.

6.1.1. Excellence realm

The premise of the four socially constructed realities of leadership offered in these four narratives is that they are equal. My purpose as a researcher is not to judge any realm being better than the other. One truth is not the objective of this research. The responsibility for this task is left to the readers. These four realms just offer four different realities of leadership. The first realm indicates a reality of great satisfaction of the narrators.



Figure 15: “Excellence realm ”

REALM 1 -EXCELLENCE-

We really wanted to succeed in our mission to get this quality certificate. Our leader had made every effort to work with our team. We had the feeling that we got as much training as we wanted and needed. She created all the opportunities needed to complete this mission. And we wanted to succeed! The auditing day was very exciting. I still can remember how nervous we all were. It felt very human that also she was very excited. We told her to relax and convinced her that we had done our homework – “don’t worry!” We had prepared ourselves very well and we did understand how important this certificate was for our common future in the company.

And we didn’t disappoint her or ourselves. We scored the best results ever in the company. It was absolutely a fantastic feeling to give our

leader this success – the “victory” she and we wanted so much. And our whole team wanted to be worth of confidence. We will always remember her heartfelt thanks. They were the best prize for all this intensive and hard work for our team.

Later on I have been thinking how she did it. She must have given lot of thought to how to motivate us. She knew that first she had to make us believe in our success and to understand the reasons behind this event. Through this process our work got a new meaning and we saw the learning in the new light. We all got a strong feeling that what we do and what we don’t do has a significant role for our entire organisation. I wish I had our leader’s ability to sense the right moments for actions. She was absolutely amazing with that.

Our leader was not present in our office every day, by the way. Actually her office was in another city. You hear so many stories that this “not seeing all the time” means troubles. In our team that was not the case. She somehow managed to show her interest in each team’s work. She was even interested on each team members’ well-being at work individually. Sometimes she just called and asked “how are you?” I was really happy about these phone calls. She made me feel very important for the organisation. I was a needed and respected link in the chain!

Our leader also took part in our team meetings. It was important to know that we met regularly. However, she was not at our weekly meetings where we went through the successes and the challenges of the previous week and planned our forthcoming week. From all meetings we drew up a record, which was sent to her too. This was also a nice way to show her interest on us. And then once a year we had these personal goal discussions with our leader. Those were meant to clarify your present role in the organisation and to set new goals for the future. It was important to prepare for these discussions beforehand.

Our leader was on top of everything, good at communicating with us. She just knew how to use e-mail at a manageable way. We were not drowned with the information flow but we didn’t feel that she was hiding something from us. If we did not quite understand or agree on everything, she took the time and explained everything again and again. Above all she listened to us and gave her own comments on matters. Discussed and put forward! Communication with her was absolutely always rich and productive. At this point I also want to mention her good manners. She must have been a diplomat in her “previous life.”

One of the most important matters to me was that our leader was easy to approach and to reach, even though we all knew the enormous work load she had. “My door is always open, she said.” How naturally she sometimes also asked about our families and told about her personal

life. “How is your family?” or “My physiotherapist is really good, she helped me in my back problems. I’ll call him, if he could take you too.” She really seemed to care about us. I got a feeling that she respected me as a human being and understood that my well-being at work depends on the wholeness of life.

She was seemingly enjoying her work as a leader. She was proud of what she was doing. I must say our team and our leader was working extraordinary well together. It was nice to come to work every morning. My work was energising, not exhausting me.

Do you know, I happen to enjoy excellent leadership at the moment in my work. Our boss is phenomenal. He has a special skill to handle us people as individuals. He knows how to stay close to us. As a boss, he does not act like a hermit sitting alone in his room. No, he wanders around in our offices, talking to people and sensing “what’s going on.” He also uses this moment of exercising to talk about the winds of change blowing at that moment. I think this is a very intelligent way of communicating. He doesn’t want to fence himself in the e-world, where only e-mail as a communication tool is in power. He respects the traditional face-to-face way as much as possible.

Trusting us completely means lot of challenges for us experts. We constantly have to jump out from our comfort zones and show what we can do. We invest on education, including him. Our boss has understood that he doesn’t know everything and he doesn’t have to know everything of everything. In case we struggle with something, he is there with the right attitude and right words. The problems tend to be solved with his mere presence. He is a busy person, but with his positive attitude the busyness kind of melts away. His goals are clear. We always know what to do. He was the one, who made us believe in growth. We “small ones” can do it in a positive atmosphere and it still can be profitable business. I wonder how he can be so calm and considerate in difficult situations. What comes to critique and positive feedback, our boss is very clear. He gives both with style. Nobody gets hard feelings of critique and positive feedback is given in every possible way.

I wish I could be a “cheerleader” like him. I am trying to learn as much as possible from him and act as a team member in the same way. If I should describe his leadership style with a couple words, it would be the

feeling of safety. I am in good hands: I like my work and I am happy there. I work with my heart. I wish everybody could share this feeling.

6.1.2. Balance realm

If Excellence represents leadership where only the sky seems the limit Balance represents a social reality where leadership is more down to earth. From the follower perspective, Balance is a satisfactory reality.



Figure 16: “Balance realm”

REALM 2

-BALANCE-

There were big changes in our company. The whole company was supposed to start working in teams. We were of course quite skeptical about teamwork. How would it benefit our work? Who would be our leader? We got a new leader from another department. She had been part of the sales organisation before and she was now promoted. She was quite young and had very little leader experience from previous jobs, but she was seemingly eager to learn. She put all her cards on the table right from the beginning, telling us that she doesn't have too much experience in leadership issues, but she would start learning. "How do you eat an elephant?" she asked us. "Piece by piece – so let's work for it."

I must say that I was surprised how smoothly everything began to work out. To start with, she frankly wanted us to learn more about the new organisation model. We all, including her, sat in team building seminars more than once. Together we were studying and figuring out the secrets of teamwork. These seminars were the key tool for us followers to understand the basic questions of the new way of working together and especially to get to know her better. The working atmosphere was very relaxing and somehow fresh. I started to trust her.

She had good knowledge of the branch and perhaps that is why she had a very clear vision of our future. We had our weekly and monthly meetings where our future was often on the agenda. We got as much information of the company's success and plans as we needed. She was open in her communication style, which kept us peaceful. It was interesting to realise how she took care everyone said his/her opinion in the meetings. She must have had bad experiences from her former work life of not being able to talk when it was the time. In the beginning some older colleagues felt uncomfortable expressing themselves in front of everybody. But she was extremely determined on "teaching" everybody to open their mouths. To me this sounded like democracy and fairness. Didn't we always want this in our coffee break discussions?

She was an active person by nature and always in the front line, introducing for example new customer applications. At that time, new applications equaled more grey hair for us. I must admit she didn't leave

us alone with the untested raw versions of the applications, which was quite often the situation. She, as a leader, was the one who contacted deliverers and customers in the middle of chaos. In general she took the responsibility of the decisions she had made. Paradoxically, in spite of her active personality, the decision making was also sometimes her weak spot. She just couldn't decide alone and the backup was needed from upper leaders. We kind of learnt to put up with this and hoped this was due to her lack of experience in leading.

Our results haven't been bad either. Our team works well together and we found out in a short time that our communications had become more fluent. All in all – she had a good touch in leadership and I liked working with her.

Spirit, with capital S, is the right word to introduce our boss. Where ever he shows up, his spirit and charisma follow. This is also what our customers say. By respecting and trusting us he has won our confidence. Our confidence is also his benefit, I hope. I can remember many situations, where other departments or outsiders have tried to interfere with our work. He always steps in and defends us. It is not important, whether we lose or win, but we have the feeling that he'll stay beside us whenever needed.

I'm proud of his communication skills. The information flows between us extremely well. He has a nice, very polite habit of asking you to do something. Always when he leaves me a note or gives me written instructions to do something, he begins his note by "Dear T". I really like this. In case you have problems or questions, feel free to ask and just knock on his door. He will help you. He will find a way or often he "forces" me to find a solution by myself. "You can do it, just trust yourself!" His continuous encouragement pushes us all towards better performance. The open communication culture is also strengthened by his ability not to be anybody's personal friend. We all are equal in front of him and he is our leader equally and no-one has any doubts about that.

Our job is challenging, but when everybody knows their duties and responsibilities, it is easy to work. Things just flow! Little everyday problems don't devastate our day. We'll solve them together. Every year we have regularly development discussions with him. In that discussion we lay out together my future. It is a very important moment to talk about me and my wishes. He tells me what he expects from me and asks what I expect from him. I am always looking forward to my development discussions. I also have the feeling that these discussions are important to him as well.

Between colleagues, we have discussed a lot about our way of giving feedback to each other in our organisation. The leader knows exactly the power of feedback and thanking. The words "thank you" can sometimes work wonders! He wouldn't forget to bring up good customer feedback in meetings. Sometimes he stops at your desk and gives the feedback personally. I just wish we followers remembered to give him feedback too and tell him also how much this kind of behaviour means to our team. It is our daily fuel!

Our leader is a busy man. He gets invitations to all kinds of happenings. When we as a work team have a party, he will be there partying with us. It is nice that he relaxes and has fun with us. This means also a lot to us and to me. He is one of us.

6.1.3. Quasi realm

In the third reality, the voice of the followers is turning to the more negative and unsatisfactory side of experiencing leadership. There is this feeling of make believe about the practices and the whole phenomenon.



Figure 17: “Quasi realm”

REALM 3

-QUASI-

Quite often I have to ask myself, why somebody wants to become a leader, if he/she is not interested of the actual leader work. I bet some people don't even know what they should do or they simply don't care about leadership issues. Better salary will be paid anyway. They seem to have always more important tasks to do. They may think that we, the followers, don't see or understand it.

Our boss was promoted from our team. The usual story: from a good expert to a leader. It was interesting to follow closely what was going to happen. He had had good customers and interesting projects in his former job. He wanted to keep them. He said he enjoyed working with them. From where would he take the time to lead? He had his hands deep in his projects and had no time or real interest in leadership. Of course he got leader's duties like meetings, budgets, development discussions, et cetera on the top of his own projects. He didn't think they were that important and he could do them with left hand. The more time pressure he got, the more moody he got. We quickly learnt to avoid him on those days. Little by little all started to look like kindergarten.

The meetings were endless discussions where no decisions were ever made. We left the meetings asking each other what the point of the meeting was. Nothing was written down on paper. But we had our meetings, because it was said so in our company rules. In those meetings he acted like a friend trying to please everybody. If he had to inform us of some big changes in the company, he told the news to just one or two "best buddies." The rest of us had to just content to guessing. He was totally lost with his leadership skills.

You know, in January our company is the best "theatre" in town. It is time to have development discussions. They are a joke. Listen to this: once, when I went to his office for my discussion, he was on the phone. He gave me a sign to sit down. He was chatting with somebody more interesting than me. I waited, of course. "Ok, let's see what we've

scribbled last year, he started the discussions. There is nothing special, is there?" I told him or I was trying to tell him that I would like to get a more defined job description and that I was not satisfied with the way our team works. We could actually do better. I was desperately trying to develop myself and our organisation. The discussion had taken maybe fifteen minutes when the phone rang again and of course he took it. In a couple seconds he was waving his hands meaning that I should leave the room. Of course I did. It was quite depressing to me. He never came back to this development discussion any more.

My colleague had a bit more "effective" discussion with him than me: "You know, I am very busy at the moment. Let's just change the dates of this bloody form and we are done." Other team member was told to have the discussion on the way to customer meeting in a car. That would save some time, you know. Right in the beginning of the "moving discussion," the boss had told her how unhappy he was with her results. The rest of the "developing" car trip was very silent. These discussions don't mean anything to him. He organises them just because he wants to polish his reputation in front of his boss. It doesn't make any difference whether you say something or you don't. What a waste of time!

Finding motivation even for your daily routines at work is sometimes very difficult. Why would I bother about any development if he shows no interest in my work?

During the last three years my boss has waded in my work very little face to face. Even when our margins were not blooming as expected, even when the whole process was stumbling quite a lot, she didn't help us. She didn't care. There was neither encouragement nor telling off. We called her "The Invisible." I think she thought that giving us total freedom is good leadership. But it isn't.

She was totally absorbed in the customer world in the day time. Customers were her "babies." She would do anything to be able to sell more. In the afternoon, when we left the work place, she stayed in her

office till the night writing us notes by e-mail. This was the leadership we got – nightly notes by e-mail. So every morning you could “meet” your boss in your e-mail. Mostly she had sent long reports and Excel tables. I don’t know anybody who is so keen on her tables. These tables were more important to her than we followers ever were. There was hardly anything ever face to face. One morning a team member found a written notice on his desk. Our boss didn’t show up until the afternoon. Of course the sacked team member had left the company right away. So they didn’t meet anymore. This is called cowardice from the boss side in my mind.

We found her also extremely reserved. In case she had to discuss with us, she was tempted to blame the corporate rules and leaders in front of us. It was not persuasive at all. I must really wonder why she ever wanted to become a boss or why she was appointed to this position. I think she was too afraid of not taking the position and she was a “neat” solution for the higher bosses. She wouldn’t make any turbulence and she was a hard working person in everybody’s eyes.

Freedom is welcomed at work nowadays, but there are many situations where a boss is needed. Couple years ago I was totally overloaded with my work. I did talk with her, but she didn’t really listen to me. She promised to talk to the department head. Nothing ever happened. Maybe it was too difficult for her to talk to her boss about my work. She didn’t know my work so she couldn’t lose her face.

She had her funny “soft” side, though. She often brought cakes to our coffee table. This was her other way of “talking” to us. The cake was her bad conscience talking – many times a week. She must have felt very uncomfortable being our boss.

6.1.4. Anarchy realm

The fourth narrative, Anarchy, represents an extreme of the leadership realities. Anarchy is a leadership reality with surrealistic characteristics. It feels like its episodes don't belong to this time and era of working life.



Figure 18: "Anarchy realm"

REALM 4

-ANARCHY-

Come to our workplace and you'll find a real "witch pot" of today. It has been bubbling for years, boiling over every now and then. Nobody really cares anymore. Leaders one after another have come and gone and years have passed. Even leaders' leaders have tried, but without success. The problems have been covered up long enough. It is kind of paradoxical: everybody knows where the problem is, but nobody puts it in the spotlight. You don't want to burn your fingers twice, do you? That's why the pot is still boiling. Amazing, isn't it?

Our present boss has only few years to her retirement. She had been the boss already earlier, but she didn't like it. I understood that she was forced to take this position for her last years. She didn't want to be a boss for this department. So, it is obvious that her motivation to lead is zero, maybe even negative. When I came to this job, she told me in a very laconic way that this community had some human relation problems. I could hardly believe that she told me this. Why hadn't she done something if she knew about the problems?

What was the actual problem then? I soon found out that an unofficial group had achieved or taken power in our organisation and they knew how to play the game. As it is said, a power vacuum will always be filled and while the cat's away, the mice will play. These "witches," as I call them, literally and systematically tease outsiders. They disturb your job by sowing fear, by gossiping and spreading rumors. They define their own work tasks and they lie without hesitation to save face. Every day I have to ask myself, if I am living in the 21st century? This is like a bad dream.

The point is that our boss refuses to do anything. She just ignores the whole problem, as if it wasn't there. I have talked to my boss. I tried to find a way to move forward and to develop our jobs. I suggested that we should have same rules for everybody to start with. I remember her trying something, but as soon as the power group stood up, she fell silent. She has totally given up and also her bosses have given up. This isn't weak leadership, this is no-show.

Just imagine how it is to work in that kind of atmosphere. It is really hard to keep up the facade, so that customers wouldn't catch too much of this. I am sure we can't "fool" them too long and what then?

Working in an organisation where you never know where the wind blows every morning is hard, if not impossible. My big boss was a weathervane. Reflecting back after a couple of years, I still can't understand him. I do not know what kind of a person he really was. Every time you met him, he was a different person. At one moment he was a calm expert, knowing how to deal with our business and customers. The next moment he could shout at us about any little matter and his language was beneath all criticism. He sometimes acted like a total nervous wreck. The whole world seemed to be against him. Once I was there when he fired a colleague just because he didn't share his opinion with him. Just like that! Then came the joyful day when he was joking and laughing with us. During this "scene," his behaviour was hyperactive. He planned the "pink" future of the company. He gave us empty promises of better salaries. There were days when he didn't even show up at work, even though he was needed. He took time off whenever he wanted to. No explanations needed!

This worked only because he had his little assistant manager, who was distinguishing these fires day after day. He was officially not our boss, but because of the unique nature of our official big boss, he had to carry out boss's duties. I think he tried to save the organisation's face somehow. Don't know why, though. He took care of internal communications. He was the one who managed the daily work process: giving instructions when needed, deciding who does what and when. And above all, he was the one who negotiated with the big boss. We followers were not that interested to meet the big boss. Only few people had the courage to talk to him face to face. When the big boss needed something, everybody had to fit in his schedule right away. He was dominating everything.

How about our ancient feedback culture? If you made a mistake, you knew that the big boss would sooner or later embarrass you in front of everybody. This public humiliation was part of our organisational culture. Even if you hadn't done any mistakes, or at least thought you hadn't, he was the master of imagining that you had made one. Having a bad day meant that somebody had to be the scapegoat. We were all terrified most of the time.

It must be quite clear to everybody that continuous sick leaves are more than common in this kind of working environment. Once I was there when the boss was joking on my colleague's "burn out." I couldn't believe it! Also we, followers, started little by little to vent our anger on each other. They were often little things, like "who has used my chair?" We could not see the wood for the trees any more. We needed outside help but it was just like taking a medicine pill, not trying to find the real reason for the symptoms. Of course and to nobody's surprise the big boss didn't see any problems around!

There is one thing I just could not stand at all in our boss. He could not control his alcohol use. For the staff members, this meant several unpleasant occasions with customers. Almost without exception somebody had to take away in order to avoid major catastrophes. Somebody always covered him.

I spent a couple years in this complex and "unique" company. I did talk with him face to face a couple times and, surprisingly, he was ok. Then I just gave my notice and shut down my computer and walked away. I didn't have any special reason but I just didn't stand his behaviour any more. It was such a relief. Later I have been thinking that maybe I should have taken the bull by the horns and tried to do something. But I just left everything and escaped – or should I say I saved my skin.

6.2. Contrasting the realms

The four narratives of leadership processes, Excellence, Balance, Quasi and Anarchy, are now open for interpretation. The focus in this chapter is to interpret and contrast each narrative's "soul," the relational dynamics, keeping an eye on my research question; how is leadership constructed? (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Or as Foucault has expressed: "*freeing the conditions of emergence*" (Foucault in Wood, 2005, p.24). The first intention is to interpret the narratives using Beech's six factor analysis model, coined here as "moral-functional contrasting" in order to better describe relational understanding of the process. Wood speaks about the exploring "*the values associated with the emerging differences*" (Wood, 2005, p.21). The model differentiates between the four narratives in six aspects; moral, integration, causality, efficacy, temporality, and style of the behaviour (Beech, 2000).

"Where managers seek to build trust with employees, for example, a deeper understanding of the interpretations and meaning of employees would be important because direct causal chains are uncontroversial and relatively controllable, but deviant chains of influence may be necessary to understand the other party better and generate higher quality of trust. To manage such relationships, or to research them, the analysis of the one's own style (and recognition of its impact on perception) and the ability to analyze the style of the other party could help to prevent problems of the type experienced by workers..... Analysis of narrative style provides the opportunity to recognize non complementary forms of interaction that can be problematic" (Beech, 2000, pp.225 - 226).

The second objective is to reflect the construction of leadership in the light of *core constructs*. This process aims to seek central elements of what is going on inside these realms. This was where the meta themes come back into the picture: professionalism, development, expression, and behaviour. With the help of the core constructs the research again journeys through the four narratives with authentic examples.

6.2.1. Moral-functional contrasting

Instead individual aspects, the relational process view brings the scene to the centre of analysis (Wood, 2005). In this narrative analysis, I was able to construct four different narrative realms which can be seen as scenes. They are called Excellence, Balance, Quasi, and Anarchy. They reflect the realities of leadership in local context. To get a clear picture of the similarities and differences of the four realms, the narratives are approached by applying Beech's 'six factor model' (Beech, 2000).

The model originates from research done with managers and workers from organisations implementing cultural change programs. Beech has derived through six factors different narrative styles. The six factors are called:

1. Lessons learned
2. Integration/differentiation
3. Causal attribution
4. Efficacy of action
5. Temporal orientation
6. Behavioural style of central character.

Beech suggests, quoting Weber (1947) and Weick (1995), that these six factors form a way of understanding “*how people view events in organizational life, construct subjective meaning, and make sense of what they perceive*” (Beech, 2000, p.214). In this research Beech’s model is used to interpret and open up the different realms. Clarifying the different factors is first necessary.

Lessons learned summarises the characteristic for the style. It tells the basis of the worldview or the moral of the narrative. It calls for the expectations influencing the future interpretations and representations of the interacting members. Several other researchers strengthen Beech’s view of the importance of the moral factor. For example, Parry (2008) and Boje (2001) highlight the moral as a central element of the narrative.

The integration/differentiation factor is about the social positioning relative to other actors. It relates to the relationships between the individual and organisation. This factor can, for example, relate to an actor being part of a group or alienated from the group. The causal attribution factor relates to an assumption about how things happen in the organisational world. It asks who or what the significant agents are. Beech clarifies that “*the causal attribution factor focuses on how actors attribute cause, praise, blame and agency in their sense making*” (Beech, 2000, p.215) For example how free an individual is to act or is she/he enslaved by technology.

Efficacy of action is about the possibility to influence organisational matters and people. It asks who can do what and who can make what happen. Temporal orientation relates to the time view of past, present, and future. The sixth factor, the behavioural factor relates to the narrative tone of the central character. The factor “*highlights the norms of behavioural engagement with others*” (Beech, 2000, p.215). As six-factor model “sounds” a bit mechanistic, I named the analysis as moral-functional analysis and perhaps described the values and intentions of this research better.

In the following, Excellence, Balance, Quasi, and Anarchy are contrasted through these factors. The contrasting is illustrated in Table 6 and then explained in detail. Each realm is also connected to possible leadership theories in order to shed light on the theoretical standpoints of leadership realms of the 21st century.

	Realms			
Factors	1. Excellence	2. Balance	3. Quasi	4. Anarchy
	Working is a joyful act!	Work is done in harmony!	Nobody really cares!	Help!
Moral factor of leadership	Leadership is loving people.	Leadership is active, organised phenomena	Leadership is not real work. It is fake.	Leadership is a despotic play.
Integration/Differentiation	Strong integration	Good integration	Differentiation	Alienation
Causal attribution: Follower	Influencing is natural action in dialog form Social process	Influencing is part of the process in dialog form/social process	Influencing does not work. One way information/Individual based	Influencing not wanted. You never know about the communication form.
Leaders	Leader listens and gives energising feedback	Leader listens and gives pertinent feedback.	Leader may listen and Feedback is empty.	Leader doesn't listen. Feedback is humiliation
Efficacy of own action (follower)	Follower is part of the leadership phenomena	Follower action is included in the phenomena	Follower action depends on the mood of leader	Follower action is not wanted.
Temporal orientation	Present and Future	Present and Future	Present	Moment
Tone of the narrative	Enthusiastic/Admiring	Positive/Satisfied	Nonchalant/Tired	Desperate/Ashamed

Table 6: Contrasting the narratives

Excellence is a narrative which reflects follower satisfaction and happiness in all its actions. Working together is a joyful action. It describes an construction where working is meaningful and important and above all energising. Leader's abilities are admired and wondered. In the Excellence realm, the moral of the story is based on strong faith in leadership and leaders' good nature and care for people. The relationship between follower and leader and organisation can be described with strong integration. The most enriching element of this realm is togetherness and its power. The followers and the leader are strongly committed to organisation, work, and to each other. The realm expresses

"(...) a relationship in which we can comfortably meet a leader as one human being to another. In a true relationship, we are neither retiring nor fawning nor manipulative. We work together with mutual respect and honesty to achieve our common goal" (Chaleff, 2009, p.12).

Leaders, teams, and individuals are totally committed to their common goals and to their work toward the goals at every level. The question "why are we doing this" is answered clearly. The vision is the "sense" of the work. An individual is able to feel that she/he is highly respected in his work and as a human being. The efficacy factor shows that followers are naturally expected to be active in the organisation in cooperation with leaders. Everybody's thoughts and actions matter greatly. Being thanked and being thankful serve considerably. Followers are continuously pushed out of their comfort zones to perform better and more, which works as a motivation factor as well. Leader is interested in the success of individuals, teams, and the organisation alike. Understanding the whole plays a significant role in everyday performance. Time orientation includes the present as well as the future. Understanding the actions of the present create the future in this realm. The tone in Excellence realm is enthusiastic and admiring.

Taking a quick look at leadership theories, the Excellence realm presents characteristics of charismatic and transformational leadership theories (see Chapter 3). They show up, for example, as leader admiration and vision-oriented narrations. In addition, ideas resembling collective leadership theories can be found in the natural reciprocal trust on people's abilities and willingness to take responsibility of organisational actions without formal structuring. On the other hand, the importance of feeling good and being happy are particular characteristics of the Excellence realm and refer to the aesthetic nature of leadership in which "*the sensory knowledge and felt meanings*" (Hansen & al. 2007, p.545) arise.

Balance realm expresses harmony and an organised construction. The worldview of this realm offers a thought that "we'll manage together." Important elements are shared goal setting, open discussion of organisational matters, and being active. To illustrate the integration factor and, in fact, the causal factor too, democracy best describes the situation. Each member of the organisation is important and equal. Participation in organisational matters is expected and wanted. The leader listens to everybody's opinions and takes care of her/his "own team." The leader makes the decisions after communicating with the team. Followers and teams are not left alone in

challenging situations. Leader takes responsibility for her/his actions. Time orientation is present and future, like in excellence realm. Cornerstones for the future are learning new skills, facing new challenges, and setting goals as normal everyday acts. The tone of the Balance style is positive and satisfied.

In the light of leadership theories, the Balance realm has shaken off charismatic and transformational leadership theories. The admired leader has become more companionable. The focus on active participation as equal colleagues refers mostly to collective leadership theory. The dominance of the leader role has diminished and melted away and the importance of doing and understanding things together is the empowering factor.

The everyday of **Quasi** realm is a confusing experience and raises questions in the minds of followers. In the Quasi realm, the lesson to be learnt is clear: leadership is not real, serious work. Leadership issues can be done with the “left hand.” In case leadership actions are taken, they are taken because of fake purposes. There is a remarkable differentiation between a leader and individual follower. The arrangement is leader against followers. Juxtaposition is obvious. Between team members integration still works and that relationship is a supporting factor. Contingency describes the actions taken in organisations. A follower must always be alert and ready. Leaders listen to followers sometimes and sometimes not. Leadership appears to the followers as an unstable, you-never-know phenomenon. There is no guarantee for any action or support. The ones who are able to influence besides the leaders are the trustees of the leader. Democracy has seldom foothold. Time orientation is present. All energy must be focused on here and now. The tone of the Quasi realm is nonchalant, suspicious, and tired.

From a leadership theory point of view, the Quasi realm represents a managerialistic worldview, in which leading and taking care of people is not considered important. Thus the most appropriate approach comes from organisational theory, in which principles of scientific management of a separate leader–follower axis is clear. Both are entities of their own. On the other hand, the Quasi realm offers room for collective leadership but the authority position is expected and missed. As unexplained and non-discussed matters, the leader’s invisibility and freedom to act lead mostly to confusing situations and questions. The possibility of collective leadership works as a reverse act.

The **Anarchy** realm represents an construction where fear and being ashamed are present. In Anarchy the moral of the story is that leadership is based on despotic play. Rules don’t rule! Anything can happen and being alert is equal to surviving. The relations between organisational actors, even between team members, are alienated. Everybody plays her/his own game in order to survive. How to do one’s work is a question mark causing head ache and tension. The causal attribution factor can be called chaotic. It is impossible to predict what happens next and who does what. Chaos exists. The actions are taken despotically by the formal leader or by unofficial leading groups. In the chaos Anarchy realm time orientation is in the present, in the very moment. The tone of the Anarchy realm is desperate and ashamed.

The Anarchy realm belongs to the classic, heroistic leader-centric theory. Leadership in the Anarchy realm goes, in its way, back to the 19th century where leaders' dictatorial and humiliating behaviour towards followers was accepted as a norm and the fear was the very master of the everyday. The autocratic leadership theory of the Anarchy realm is not a relict. It is still alive in the 21st century.

Contrasting the four realms by using moral-functional analysis revealed the "the four seasons," the four processes of leadership. They open up as different kinds of moral and functional constructions. The moral of the realms varied from comprehensive, collective understanding to irrational, despotic play of leadership. The integration factor, causal attribution factor, and efficacy factor showed the importance of follower integration in leadership processes in general. Being part of the leadership process or being differentiated or alienated from the process contrasted the realms.

These four realms representing the social, relational processes are the flow, the "going on" of the leadership phenomenon. When leadership is going on in these four realms, it is going on including "something." Searching for 'core contracts' sounded very natural as I am dealing with a construction process of leadership.

6.2.2. Core constructs

After constructing the realms and contrasting them, I became interested in the components of leadership. What actually constructs the process of going on? What is going on in between, inside the realms? I was very aware of the notion, to which other researchers also referred, that in relational leadership research, due to the process ontology should not be exposed to excessive "small cutting" (Wood, 2005).

"The ontological challenge is thus how one may remain true to the processual ontology whereby leadership is seen as a continuous flow and at the same time delimit the notion of leadership to discernible practices and interactions (...)" (Crevani & al., 2010, p.79).

Uhl-Bien and Ospina write that in bringing relationality to the leadership field, the importance of the "invisible threads that connect actors engaged in leadership processes and relationships" (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012, p.xx) must be taken into consideration. At this point I became interested in such invisible 'core constructs' by which the relational interaction is fulfilled and identified as leadership.

In doing the thematic analysis, I run into larger thematic groups around which the essays were circling. I identified them as four different discourses: professionalism, behaviour, development, and expression. In this research they are called 'core constructs.' They are used as components constructing

leadership processes inside the realms. They are the components around which leadership is going on. They are the components, which have been brought up as leadership constructs. Other researchers, such as Thatchankary have used 'core constructs' in giving meaning in his research to corporateness (Thatchankary, 1992). Also Salovaara has explained leadership transformation processes with the help of core constructs (Salovaara, 2011).

The four core constructs that ascend from the empirics were professionalism, behaviour, development, and expression. They were the ones enabling and producing leadership moments. They are illustrated in Table 5 in Chapter 5. Professionalism indicates a thematic in which issues like becoming a leader, non-leadership, and educational matters come up. Behaviour refers to practices like moodiness, bossing, and friendship at work. Development practices deal with development discussions and feedback. The fourth category, expression, deals with the themes of communication and problem solving.

With the help of the core constructs, I again enlighten the inner world, the inner space between leadership processes. I use the four narratives as categories. The quotations below are direct translations from Finnish from the original empiric material. In many essays, it was impossible to figure out the gender of the leader in the narratives, so it is chosen randomly. It plays no role in this research.

Excellence realm

Leadership is considered as highly professional practice. The main component is the leader's strong will to work as a leader. The leader is fully committed and devoted to the leadership role and its duties, including managerial and leadership tasks. The leadership actions are prioritised as a top function of the leader. The leader is seemingly enjoying what he/she is doing.

"She did everything very naturally and she could make leadership look like an easy but challenging job. She oozed good self confidence and self-knowledge. She was herself and she was able to work as an example and challenge the follower to better performances. She was a strong and trustworthy person. I regarded her as my role model and I think that she has influenced my self-development as a follower and as a human being with her leadership and personality. I hope I still could one day have as skilful and inspiring leader like her" (Essay No.11).

"This leader was really motivated as a leader. He piloted our team towards commonly agreed goals. He shared responsibility. Everybody had their own sphere of responsibilities, partly according to one's preferences. He dared to share responsibility and trusted that things will be done. He was also very aware of everybody's job descriptions. (...) You seldom see a leader who has so much persistence and motivation to work and do his best. He had explicitly always headed to

become a leader which is of course the best starting point to develop himself as a leader” (Essay No. 70).

The core of the behavioural practice is predictability and consistency. In the excellence realm, the predictability of a leader’s behaviour is high and it can be regarded trustworthy in every situation. The feeling of working together is relaxed. Followers are able to act, ask, and take risks without losing the feeling of safety. Also good manners play a significant role in behavioural practices.

“My own trust in the leader was high all the time and I highly respect her as a leader. Her predictable and consistent action created the basis of our business. (...) She had created a work community, in which the followers experienced the work rather as a vocation than a boring routine” (Essay No. 95).

“When I started to work in his team, he introduced me to all the team members and to the whole department and to all other important people outside the department and he told me about our department and my duties. His respectful, polite, appreciative, and friendly behaviour felt really good” (Essay No. 13).

Another aspect of feeling safe is the importance of presence. Mastering the skill of being present, both physical and mental presence is crucial. Handling matters also at the individual level is considered important in the Excellence realm.

“Physically our leader was located in T, so she wasn’t there every day. This didn’t though disturb our work, because her actions showed us that she was interested in us as a team and as individuals” (Essay No. 11).

“I am enjoying brilliant leadership at the moment. My leader is incredible. He considers followers as individuals and he gives a feeling of closeness. He doesn’t shut away in his room. Instead he is walking around in the office (...)” (Essay No. 81).

Development of both the organisation and the individual are essential parts of the work. Development discussions are regarded and understood as possibilities in zooming towards followers’ further development and assessing the past. In everyday work, feedback is a natural way to motivate as well as to criticise. The basic idea behind the development aspect is energising the follower.

“He knew how to give feedback. According to the system we had our development discussions, in which he gave feedback for my performance. The discussion was very convivial and we also discussed my family (...) I felt that he respected his followers as humans and not just workers. He thanked us followers every time it was possible (...)” (Essay No. 13).

Good communication and problem solving skills are the basic tools of showing interest in people. Both formal and informal communication is taken care of. Dialogue³ is a dominant way of communication. Problems are perceived and faced all together – not swept under the carpet. One form of expression is everyday “small talk.” The leader is interested in the follower as a whole person, not just as a resource.

“Our leader was regularly in contact with our team so she found out easily what was going on. In this situation we saw a very assertive leader. He pulled our team together and told us in the beginning of the meeting that this matter will be cleared right now and nobody leaves this room before. Without interrupting he listened to everybody’s version of the case and sometimes calmed the raging conversation down. He didn’t take anybody’s side or he was not against anybody. (...) our leader was a good negotiator and we worked out the case” (Essay No. 11).

“She can find the right words in every situation. A problem you had a moment ago that you could not overcome turns out to be soluble by my own thinking” (Essay No. 81).

“Her interest in followers and their families’ wellbeing felt very authentic. (...) She also shared her own and her relatives’ experiences of similar symptoms (...)” (Essay No.13).

The Excellence realm is an ensemble where the followers’ satisfaction is tangible. A strong feeling of safety and predictability form the core of meta practices. The realm of Excellence approaches perfection. It reflects the “ideal” process of working in an organisation.

Balance realm

Leadership is recognised as an important profession. The feeling of democratic, true, and honest leadership supports the concept of professionalism as well the working with visions and goals. They are seen as professional organisational leadership tools.

“The leader was very professional and she had clear visions about the future. She had worked on the branch many years. That also gave credence to the company and its business idea” (Essay No. 21).

“Our current leader has tried to organise that everybody would have the same chances to do the work. He seems to want that honestly” (Essay No. 5).

³ Dialogue = Written or spoken conversational exchange between two or more people. (Wikipedia 17.3.2011)

“Over time I realised how good a leader she was. She took the matters seriously and it was clear that she was the leader of our team. Her way to work and way to act was fantastic. She took her leadership position in earnest. She listened to her followers and committed herself to their proposals and problems” (Essay No. 73).

The core construct of behaviour indicates harmony and good predictability in the Balance realm. Manners of the leader are polite and “grown-up.” At the emotional level, behaviour is undramatic. Every follower is treated equally and the leader’s friendship with followers is not an issue.

“After a long time I had a feeling that I have a leader, I was excited. In spite of her young age she seemed to have all the good qualifications that leader is expected to have. She could take the matters as such without any emotional charge” (Essay No. 11).

“Every morning when he came to work he greeted every follower and treated them equally” (Essay No. 55).

“Information flow between leader and follower is good. She didn’t tend to be anybody’s friend and gain favour” (Essay No. 41).

In the Balance realm, developing practice is recognised as an obvious organisational matter. Individual development is well planned and enhanced. The leader’s encouraging attitude toward followers is a reflection of interest in individual growth. As development tools feedback and development discussions are used systematically and naturally.

“When I succeeded in my work I was thanked for that and got positive feedback” (Essay No. 13).

“My leader encouraged me to always better performances. He made me believe and trust that I could do it (I was not so sure myself). He made me believe in my own skills and that I can reach peak performances” (Essay No. 13).

“The work of our team was based on goals set every half a year. The goals were set and discussed through with your current leader and they were documented with our tool. (...) Whether the bonus was paid every half a year depended on reached goals” (Essay No. 18).

“Development discussions were held every year with the leader. (...) Development discussions include the assessment of the past and skills. Discussions have been pertinent and supportive” (Essay No. 5).

In the Balance realm, the core construct of communication is a controlled and deliberate action. Communication between leader and followers is open and fearless. In particular, listening skill is mentioned as part of good

communication. Dialogue-based communication is favoured in meetings and negotiations in order to form ideas and solve problems.

“Our first meeting ran consistently and clearly. The leader encouraged all to take part in the meeting and compose ideas how we should organise the work. (...) After the meeting we all knew what was expected from us and what the role of the new team was in general” (Essay No. 11).

“She was easy to talk to and she knew how to listen. She was a pleasant person, herself. Besides, she could be considered assertive. She was on her followers’ side and you could trust her” (Essay No. 11).

In the Balance realm, the right matters in right order and in right time highlight the authenticity of this realm. The feeling of “everything is ok” is written and readable between the lines. The most evident difference to the Excellence realm is the spectrum of emotionality.

Quasi realm

In the Quasi realm, leadership as a professional practice is an apparent phenomenon. Formally it is there “in the air” but it is not taken seriously. Due to this “lightness” in the attitude, leader is not considered to act as a professional. Leader’s interest in leadership actions is low or fake. Leadership is not recognised as real work. Becoming a leader means above all and only formal status. Becoming a leader may also be forced. Leadership is an unclear, cloudy process. It is possible that the leader is very distant person or that followers don’t even know who their leader is.

“It was clear right from the beginning that he was not respected. Some followers showed the lack of respect by speaking it out, some showed that they didn’t care about him at all. (...) I think our leader was too big for his boots” (Essay No. 11).

“Not all in leader positions necessarily want to be leaders. I have noticed that the authority position and salary gained in leader position do interest, but not nearly everybody is ready to learn the needed skills and they are considered somehow unessential points. Leadership is not regarded as a separate and demanding task but it is taken care of necessity with minimum effort and in a left-handed fashion” (Essay No. 13).

“They (healthcare) explained us that our organisation has got so many new customers that our leader didn’t have time enough for everything. She was too busy and overloaded. She would have liked to deal with our matters but unfortunately she is too busy” (Essay No. 81).

“I have mainly worked in organisations where the leader has been very far from me. Company X had a boss, but she was more like one of us.

She had many bosses above. Just her boss was considered like a boss. (...) Working in Y I never even saw my boss" (Essay No. 92).

Inconsistency of behaviour and lack of caring makes working complicated. Followers have learnt to keep their eyes open to notice whether is sensible to take action or not. Followers are not treated equally. Leader has "trustees" or friendships among followers which steers leader's behaviour. Pleasing as behavioural practice occurs. Workloads are unbalanced.

"The leader was very moody and you couldn't foresee his behaviour – typically it varied from one extreme to another" (Essay No. 90).

"Do you know what mood she has today? - I wonder whether is worth of bothering to talk to her today at all" (Essay No. 3).

"J is a little shy with people and wants to be a nice friend and he doesn't use his power position authorised to him. He does some practical things he could delegate to somebody, but obviously he doesn't dare to ask because he can do them himself. (...) Dealing with nasty matters with people is difficult to him and he rather lets his "trustees" to do this work" (Essay No. 13).

"A leader who just sits by and doesn't do a thing when a follower falls little by little down under her work load, is not a leader. Then she just moans about the long sick leave and wonders who does the work now. (...) It was terrible that she didn't understand the situation even we were trying to tell her about it" (Essay No. 15).

"I have had a leader who was too nice. She didn't want to accomplish anything which was bad. Those decisions stayed on her table. Everything was all right as long as things were ok and nothing bad happened and she didn't have to wade into nasty situations. She just wanted to deal with nice things" (Essay No. 70).

The core construct of expression reveals that confusion is the prevailing status. Communicating and solving problems with leaders are uncertain and coincidental matters. Leader has most often no time to listen because of other, more important duties. Information is dealt undemocratically.

"Problem solving in our work community is easy. That is to say they are not solved at all. The basic model is that everybody lets the irritation to accumulate, which leads occasionally to explosions (...) due to that employees are coming and going" (Essay No. 54).

"(...) from the first day she was so busy that she never had time to concentrate listening to you to the end whether it was about the work orientation or sick leave" (Essay No. 82).

“There are so many leaders that it is sometimes hard to know to whom to speak about what. They have different decision making justifications. So one can just imagine how long does decision take sometimes. (...) I have learned that to one leader it is sensible to talk about certain matters and to the other one of something else” (Essay No. 62).

“One big weakness in my boss’s behaviour is the lack of conversation. He sees no need for common meetings but instead talks to someone who happens to be near. It is then up to this person if, when, and where she is going to tell about it” (Essay No. 64).

Development is a burden without any deeper function. Development actions are taken in name only and just because of the formal organisational rules. They are not necessarily meant to lead to any development. Development discussions are empty meetings in which documents are filled in because of the rules of the company. Feedback culture is weak or zero.

“(...) I felt that my leader insisted from me analysis and reports that had no meaning other than more work for me (...) I never saw any development or renewals done by this analysis and reports even we should have done some” (Essay No. 15).

“In our company atmosphere enquiries are done regularly. Our leader asks us direct to answer them all as positive as possible that we would give a favourable picture of our community to our upper leaders” (Essay No. 64).

“I have barely got feedback from my leaders – neither positive nor negative. The leader may at most comment on my documents and point out the mistakes and ask for correcting them” (Essay No. 22).

“Our leader never thanked from work well done, never motivated us. It felt like he thought every well accomplished work was obvious. To him we were just a resource. It was typical that in the meetings when he was talking about us, he talked about “resources.” We still went to team education and there were changes in our work methods in quick notice and new applications had to be brought into the play after one day of education. Leadership seemed to be lacking totally and also backup and understanding. Followers became exhausted and the situation was extremely flammable. We were missing a leader who listened, discussed, and defended us. Our unit was drifting” (Essay No. 11).

Quasi is a realm where the unbearable lightness of leadership is present in the practices. The concern of the deficiencies and their effects on everyday work are real. You can almost hear a deep sigh!

Anarchy realm

In the Anarchy realm, the everyday practices indicate a feeling of irrationality. Leadership is considered an artificial and non-professional phenomenon. Leadership does not matter. There is no rational explanation of who is chosen to lead and why. In addition, unofficial leaders or groups exist. Power relations are unclear.

"I got the feeling that she didn't accept herself for what she was. She was not herself and she was posing as somebody else" (Essay No. 11).

"We had a feeling that he was just put into some position being a flop in his previous role" (Essay No. 11).

"The company had grown and an old follower had been put into the leader position. She had neither leader education or leader capacities. Her behaviour was depending totally on her mood and when having a bad mood, she wouldn't save her breath" (Essay No. 70).

"The 'court' didn't want any common working methods and their development and supervision, because it would have taken the power they had and which they had taken over by themselves" (Essay No. 5).

The core construct of behaviour also seems irrational. Leader behaviour is despotic and unpredictable. The leader does not care about followers' feelings and uses the power at his will. Bossing takes place. Followers feel ashamed of the behaviour and the manners of the leader.

"Believe it or not but half of her followers can choose what tasks they are doing and how they are doing them, the other half must abide by the rest. By treating followers unequally, he affects the work and the spirit of the community" (Essay No. 30).

"She told in a coffee table to one colleague that we three are relocated to another department. Then our colleague told us two. (...) The written document said that the relocation was proceeded according to the approval of parties involved" (Essay No. 22).

"We never ever had meetings, the ideas of others were never considered, orders were given like bolts from the blue" (Essay No. 21).

The core construct of expression calls to bite the bullet. Communication is humiliating and unethical. Communication avoids face to face handling of matters or resembles gossip. Fear is a tool to keep followers working. Anything is possible.

"I have noticed that he tries to avoid face to face communication (...) He uses e-mail as a communication method, using dark red text type

and doesn't send it just to the person it was meant but to everybody" (Essay No. 30).

"I often had a feeling that she was trying to box in and manipulate instead of wanting to achieve a solution satisfying both parties. She was making questions one after another and insisted answers right away" (Essay No. 11).

"Our leader had no leadership skills and he left us 'old bags' fighting alone as he put it" (Essay No. 5).

"Also all kinds of fears steered our work community. They were losing job, losing team membership, interfering with one's private life (...). The source of the information was "gossip," altered truths and even lying" (Essay No. 5).

The core construct of development does not exist in the Anarchy realm. Leader knows and decides when possible development is needed and what is needed. There is no need for followers' participation in development. Criticising is forbidden. Feedback and motivation are irrelevant factors. Leader is not interested in followers' work. Fear and being alert describe the common atmosphere.

"My leader had been working for long in the same job and according to her everything should be done like it was done in the 70's. It was not permitted to criticise the time when work was done by paper and pen. She was calling here and there even though things could have been done by computer by punching the buttons" (Essay No. 15).

"(...) in the company one got feedback and always negative and even for no reason. Feedback was given suddenly for reasons made up just because the leader happened to have a bad day. This kind of behaviour made us feel terrified every time the leader came to visit" (Essay No. 70).

In the Anarchy realm, the piercing thought is desperation and unpredictability. The process has surrealistic characters and raises a question "does this reality really exist in the 21st century."

Table 7 summarises the analysis of core constructs.

	Excellence	Balance	Quasi	Anarchy
Core construct				
Professionalism	High	High	Low	Zero
Behaviour	Noble	Correct	Apparent	Dictatorial
Development	Taken for granted	Comes with territory	Nominal act	Who cares!
Expression	Textbook example	Open-democratic	By chance	Irrational
Realm metaphor	"Christmas Eve"	"By the book"	"To be or not to be"	"Madhouse"

Table 7: Core constructs constructing the realms

Excellence is a noble process of leadership. It is a process which represents the idealistic process of leadership. It is rare in the empirical material but clearly expressed. Professionalism in leadership is obvious and of high level. Leadership is considered a professional and serious matter. Interaction is transparent and human. Organisational and individual development is essential work of a leader. The Balance realm also reflects leader's will to become professional. Interaction and development are vocational and well taken care of.

The distinction between the Excellence and Balance realms is in the relations between leader and followers. In Excellence the relation reminds a partnership in which a follower's whole life matters. In the Balance realm, the relationship between follower and leader is more strictly limited to work.

According to the empirical material, Quasi is the dominant leadership realm. It is a leadership realm where actual leadership is put aside. It is not considered real work and leadership is not accepted as a professional phenomenon of its own. There is no time for leadership issues. Transparency of interaction is coincidental and unconfident. Development actions are fake. Leadership authenticity can be described as marginal.

The Anarchy realm is a reflection of non-professionalism in which despotic behaviour and interaction and development take place. Leadership authenticity is zero.

These four realms are results of a long analysis process beginning from the first readings of the essay data. None of the realms exist pure in original essays. The realms are reconstructions from a number of essays. The realms are also contrasted with each other by using moral-functional analysis and core constructs as basis of the analysis in order to give a more detailed and

enlightened understanding of the processes going on inside the realms. I then became interested of the space between the realms. Is there something that would complement this research?

6.2.3. The “space between” of realms

“(...) a good narrative analysis prompts the reader to think beyond the surface of a text (...)” (Riessman, 2008, p.13).

Riessman’s words made me think and led me to look at the space between realms. As social systems are not static and do not remain “still” very long, the space between becomes an interesting point (Barker, 2001). In the four realm narratives, I described the processes of leadership constructed in follower context. I illustrated them with the help of core constructs, the invisible threads, asking how does the space between the realms construct. But as the four realms are in a continuous state of flux, I became curious about the space between the realms and their invisible threads (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012). What could that be within this research?

Directing the interest to the space between the realms, it was again necessary to focus on the original essays. They led the research to ***the discourse of readjusting***. The space between consist of invisible threads of merging of different realms. The discourse of readjusting describes the thoughts in the process of leadership when talking about the forthcoming unknown, emerging realm. This discourse exists in the space between the realms when transition is going on. As a part of the puzzle, the readjusting thread had actually arisen much earlier during the research process when going through the material, but I could just not find a right place for it at that point.

These thoughts are given backed in literature at least by Barker and Heifetz. In accordance with presenting leadership as a dissipative, transforming system, Barker refers to adaptation process by saying: *“Leadership is a process of adaptation and of evaluation; it is a process of dynamics of exchange and the interchanges of value”* (Barker, 2001, p.491). A transforming system is always about to evolve into new modes of operation, new structural order, and new relationships with its environment (ibid.). Heifetz also aligns leadership with adaptive work. With adaptive work he refers to work that requires a change in values, beliefs or behaviour. It happens in situations where people experience a gap between the values faced and the values they stand for (Heifetz, 1994).

To illustrate the moves from one realm to another, I created a table illustrating the changes between realms essay by essay (Appendix 1). I then focused on gathering examples of discourses referring to the existence of readjusting. Perhaps the most representative quotation of the existence of readjusting discourse was the example saying:

“Changing a leader always changes leadership” (Essay No. 64).

In fact, this example prompted me to the thematic. Moving from one realm to another was preceded in the essays by thoughts describing the readjusting. The quotation below refers generally to the nature of readjusting experiencing leadership. Like the above example also the following example has the focus in adapting in individual's wills and needs (Barker, 2001).

"The constant changes of leaders clearly affected the working of our team. We were under continuous change and always when the leader changed, changed also the way of working of our team and partly also those matters we focused on" (Essay No. 5).

In the next examples, readjusting is described by sensing and exploring the situation and using a lot of effort to adapt. Barker says incisively that leadership is also *"a process of energy, not structure"* (Barker, 2001, p.491).

"The organisation I came from was much more developed and the culture was different. (...) I came open minded to that work (new organisation) and I was pleased because I had gotten a workplace from my home city. I started with a low profile, listening and asking. Pretty soon I realised that something was wrong really badly" (Essay No. 9).

"We did move to an openly aggressive atmosphere, we were not wanted as a part of the work community. It was very tough to be part of the problematic scene" (Essay No. 1).

In one essay (No. 8), readjusting discourse is illustrated interestingly in three sub-headings. In the first one the writer refers first to *"the next acquaintance was an interesting weathervane"* describing the working in the conditions where unexpectedness ruled. The second sub-heading says that *"and then began the real razzle-dazzle"* referring to prevailing conditions where the organisational roles were totally unclear and dissipative. The third one says *"and after all this, it was bit hard to get used to kindergarten style."* In the essay the writer refers to leadership as an obligation. This highlights readjusting at its purest.

Summing up the readjusting discourse, I use Barker's example of carnival. He enlightens adaptation in a dissipative system with a clarifying example.

"Imagine a carnival. There are various attractions set up in a structured way, but the crowd responds to the structure of the environment by creating, dissolving, and recreating its own structure. While the structure of the attractions has influence on the crowd, these patterns are influenced by the direct application of value. From the single vantage point, the crowd appears chaotic sometimes and orderly at other times. As different attractions change activity level, lines form and then dissipate and reform somewhere else. Taken as a whole, the crowd appears to be milling about randomly. But careful observation will reveal groupings of people waxing and waning in what may

eventually become predictable patterns of structure” (Barker, 2001, p.488).

Barker says that *“although dissipative systems are unpredictable, they obey rules”* (Barker, 2001, p.490). Those “rules,” like in the carnival example, may appear after careful observation and sensing (Barker, 2001). In the essay material, readjusting happened between the four different realms. The rules of readjusting in accordance with leadership discussion would be an interesting topic also for further research. They are beyond this research material.

In this research the research question *“how is leadership constructed in the essays of adult students”* has been now faced from three angles. In this relational approach to leadership, it has been mostly about the reconstruction of the processes, the realms, and facing the “space between” with the help of core constructs and with the discourse of readjusting in follower context.

To sum up this analysis phase, leadership constructs in this research of four realms of leadership understood as processes of leadership (Excellence, Balance, Quasi, and Anarchy). The insides of the realms consist of four core constructs (professionalism, behaviour, development, and expression) that construct leadership differently in each realm. In spaces between the realms, the discourse of readjusting constructs the leadership phenomena. These three fundamentals (four realms, four core constructs, and readjusting discourse) are the results of the analyses. They construct the leadership phenomenon this study has been searching for. This research still needs to reflect on earlier research and consider its contribution to the field.

6.3. Discussing with relational leadership

Van Maanen says that in relational research, the importance of avoiding the argumentation of certainty is preferred. He encourages writing in a way which calls for open dialogue instead for arguing in a way that alternative interpretations are closed down (Van Maanen in Bradbury & al., 2000). This serves as a method of increasing communication, creativity, and validity in the long run in scientific research.

In this study relational leadership is understood through three main basic elements: process focus, multiple local-cultural-historical realities as context, and the ongoing nature of being, the continuity. The three elements are now discussed in relation to this study.

Process focus, in contrast to individual focus, shifts the attention to collectiveness, to various combinations of relations and contexts (Uhl-Bien, 2006). This ‘unpacking’ of the leadership phenomenon has happened threefold. First leadership is interpreted as four different realms. In relational terms, this research searched for alternative interpretations of realities. In this study the four realms represent the process of leadership in the follower context. Leadership is constructed here through Excellence, Balance, Quasi,

and Anarchy as different kind of realities in which the interaction of relations occurs. They reflect different kind of social processes the actors are related to. The value of describing different realities lies in opening up a dialogue among participants in order to be able to go on with constructing.

“The world is seen as being brought into being via our collaborative ‘storying’ of our experience, implying that as humans, we can actively intervene in constructing the societies and organizations we’d like to see emerge” (Abell & Simons in Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.663).

The relating happens in this study with the help of core constructs. They define the conditions of leadership differing in each realm. For example ‘developing’ is one of the four core constructs processes in Excellence as implicit part whereas in Anarchy it is totally lacking. Being related has here taken the shape of four core constructs; professionalism, developing, behaving, expression.

According to relational leadership, the ideas of universal realities and truths are abandoned. It is the context that matters and justifies the relational dialogue. The logic of relational constructionism refers to respect for local historical and social meanings. To put it simply: what works here, will possibly not work somewhere else or what seems right in a certain context is accused as wrong in some other domain. The conventions of local settings seeded in history steer the wrongs and rights of a community (Hosking, 1999).

Quite a lot of effort is put in thinking of the context aspect of the research. What can be said about the context? In general it could be said the essays are certainly written in the context of western ideology of working. Czarniawska says that *“to understand a society or some part of a society, it is important to discover its repertoire of legitimate stories, and find out how it evolved (...)”* (Czarniawska, 2004, p.5).

The texts have been drawn from Finnish working life, which has its own local-historical characteristics as always being geographically in the focal point of west and east. A reader from a different context would perhaps find the categorisations in some way odd and wrong.

Perhaps the most inspiring context comes from the follower angle. I used some time to go through the history of followers in contemporary working life. Thee organisational lens as well as the leadership research lens is used to find out how the followership issue has evolved over time. The follower standpoint is extremely important for the construction of the leadership phenomenon as this study uses essays written from the follower standpoint as empirical material. *“Human agency, that is, the action and inactions of social actors, is “always” and at every moment confronted with specific conditions and choices”* (Boden in Tsoukas & Chia, 2002, p.577).

But there is another interesting way to understand locality. Suggesting abandoning the concept of the very local, Czarniawska and Jorge launch the concept of ‘translocal.’ It means that every community as a local unit is

influenced by different ways (TV, press, Internet, etc.) by other communities of the world. This means that the conventions are constantly changing. Czarniawska and Jorges distill their idea of global: it is actually “*a hugely extended network of localities*” (Czarniawska & Jorges in Koivunen, 2007, p.299). In this sense local in its purest form is a paradox.

Perhaps the most evident focus point of relational leadership in this study was the continuity aspect, the ongoingness. Clarifying the ongoingness of the processes, I first turned to Barker’s (2001) thoughts on the different forms of systems and their predictability. First of all social systems, such as relational leadership, are not static systems and stability is unlikely to remain long. Barker refers to three kinds of systems in which the predictability organises differently.

The classical system dynamics consists of the traditional, controllable isolated systems, where stability is a predominant ideology. In leadership this has meant mechanistic assumptions of controllable reality and of predictable change processes. “*The stability of the classical system (as applied to organizations) is accomplished through the imposition of structure and standard operating procedures (...)*” (Barker, 200, p.485). This has been adopted to classical leadership and organisation theories.

The second system is called an equilibrium seeking system. Its central ‘figure’ is entropy, which in organisational context means any kind of disruption. This structure-preserving system also seeks for stability but without a complete form. It takes into account the possible unpredictability in change process and the unpredictability is seen as continuous act. It is then met by adaptation and reorientation processes. “*(...) change is incremental in nature, and that adaptation or minimizing energy loss can be facilitated through sequential shifting of structure*” (Barker, 2001, p.486).

The third system is called a dissipative system. In relational leadership, discussion often refers to messy, chaotic, indeterminate, dissipative forms of leadership (Hosking, 2011; Wood, 2005; Ladkin, 2010; Uhl-Bien, 2006). The nature of dissipative system originates from “*spontaneous formation of structures in open systems which exchange energy and matter with their environment*” (Barker, 2001, p.486). Its focus is in the environment and the micro-system influencing each other. A dissipative system has an endless flowing process structure. In this system predictability is not in focus. It emerges from “*collected observations of the results of applied values over time.*” (Barker, 2001, p.488). The dissipative system refers at best to the four realms as processes going on. In the table (Appendix 1) I illustrate the changing of realms in each essay. It seems that there is no particular order at hand.

In accordance with the ongoingness, I have highlighted the readjusting nature of emerging leadership by bringing up examples of readjusting discourse in the empirical material. Leadership is always in a “*process of organizing*” (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Most of the narrators in this research had had experiences of at least two or more realm changes (see Appendix 1).

In this chapter I have had my “hands on” in scientific problem solving. I have had at same time my hands in constructing the leadership phenomenon and unpacking it in order to answer the research question. In the beginning of this journey there were a pile of essays. In the process of doing research I wish to have opened up and enlightened the leadership phenomenon through the four narratives. It is now time to close up and draw conclusions accompanied by old wise words regarding the ongoingness of things.

“Everything flows and nothing abides; everything gives way and nothing stays fixed... Cool things become warm, the warm grows cool; the moist dries, the parched becomes moist... It is in changing that things find repose” – (Greek philosopher Heraclitus 500 B.C. in Morgan, 1997, p.251).

7.

CONCLUSIONS



Figure 19: “Footprints” of this research

This final chapter concludes “the footprints” of this study. At first the core of the research setting is captured. This is followed by an overview of the basic elements of the study; leadership as a current phenomenon, the followers’ journey into leadership research, the relational leadership orientation and narrative methodology, and the analyses of the empirics. Each study and researcher comes from a certain context and has limitations. They are also discussed. In addition, I present some practical implications this study might entail. Final words sketch further avenues for leadership research. In fact, the most final words are announced in post scriptum representing the ultimate distillation of the whole.

7.1. Research sum up

In this study I have explored the construction of leadership written down in adult student essays. I have used narrative methodology to reconstruct and further analyse the narratives. The purpose was to explain and reconstruct the leadership phenomenon through the research question; how is leadership constructed in narratives? Talking about leadership through narratives, this study presents four different constructions coined the realms of leadership; Excellence, Balance, Quasi, and Anarchy. The four realms represent leadership processes, the relational realities revealed in this research.

Current reflections in leadership literature highlight without exception the complexity of the phenomenon. First of all the leadership phenomenon has widened to relate to all participants, their relations, and interactions (i.e. Hosking, 2011; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Kellerman, 2012). At the same time, globalisation and digitalisation have shaken every organisation and their every member. And above all, the speed everything is changing has made us talk about leadership as a complex phenomenon. The paradigm of order and stability has shifted towards a paradigm of dynamic change (Hinssen, 2010). Leadership has gone with the flow and the phenomenon deserves new reflections.

For decades mainstream research has considered leadership equal to a leader as a person and a role. It has been an individual construction. The essays also clearly showed that the institutionalised idea of leaders and followers is strong. Leader's role has been loaded with desire and superiority in the society (Kellerman, 2012). This has led to research paths searching for best and ideal qualifications and behaviour of leaders (i.e. Yukl, 2010; Grint, 2011).

Such research and related societal discussions have been extremely powerful in institutionalising the phenomenon. *"Leadership is a well-known and institutionalized concept in society, and that actors often tend to draw upon institutionalized notions of leadership in their daily construction of leadership activities"* (Crevani & al., 210, p.80). Toward the end of the 20th century, leadership research became acquainted with social sciences. This has led the current debate to understand leadership as a relational, ongoing process bound with the local historical context. This relational process nature of leadership informs also this research.

Before going to relational understanding of leadership, this study first journeyed with the followers' history to become a part of the leadership phenomenon understood as a social construction. The follower frame derives from a pre-understanding and the pre-reading of the student essays. The essays had been narrated clearly from the follower position. This intrigued my interest in the follower frame. If leadership and its leader had positive connotations, the follower connotation was the opposite. It referred to passivity and inferiority. It has been labelled 'out of date.'

From an etymological point of view, followers were meant to be the ones to assist leaders in difficult situations. The evolutionary aspect of following refers to group coordination instead. There were times when following was seen crucial in order to survive. Perhaps the most influencing and powerful change for followers was the historical twist from federalist to industrial society. Whereas federalist society positioned its citizens as free, multi-skilled, self-controlling units, the industrialised society took its workers under control and placed them in a sub-ordinate position in order to manage them.

This positioning has had long living impacts in the discussions regarding leadership. Leadership research itself developed slowly from pure leader-centricity to viewing leadership as a social phenomenon that includes followers as constructors of leadership. This has happened only during the last couple of decades. In this study also a brief look at follower's position in organisational research is made.

Over time the silent, obeying followers became active, recognised members of the organisation (Peltonen, 2010). To my understanding, the mainstream of leadership research still understands leadership as a leader activity. This research has been swimming upstream and faced the social constructed relational understanding of the leadership phenomenon.

Relational leadership is seen more as an orientation than a theory (Uhl-Bien, 2006). In this orientation, research is seen as "*a process of reconstructing realities and relations*" (Pearce in Hosking, 2011, p.464). This is also the focus of this research. Summing up, relational leadership relies on the following core principles: 1) the relational orientation understands leadership as a process of relating, 2) Leadership is 'made in' processes of relating, 3) The processes have an ongoing nature, and 4) The focus can be seen in small moments of interaction. Leadership is 'going on' endlessly in language-based relations which always have a local-historical context. The contextuality makes leadership a multi-voiced phenomenon as human beings are always meaning-making 'products' of their contexts.

To capture the 'moments' and to reconstruct the realities, narrative methodology has been used. It offered a rich rhetoric means of expression and gave room for interpretation. It is and has always been a powerful method of knowing. The human kind and nowadays organisations have successfully used narrating as a tool of making meaning and interpreting complex phenomena in a way that captivates the audience.

This study can be labelled as a case of constructing and 'unpacking' the leadership phenomenon. In this research adult student essays has been used as empirical material. Their leadership descriptions were reconstructed into four realms – Excellence, Balance, Quasi, and Anarchy. They are four different constructions of leadership. Together they represent the leadership process going on in reality.

Excellence reflects the reality in which leadership constructs around the caring and sharing nature of leadership. Balance realm manifests for harmony and

co-operational aspects of reality. On an axis of satisfactory and unsatisfactory, Excellence and Balance form the satisfactory end. Moving toward the other end, the Quasi realm constructs a fake scenery. It also turned out to be the dominant narrative. The fourth realm, Anarchy, is full of surrealism. It represents a reality where leadership moments do not represent accepted local-historical values. In another context they might have been categorised differently. The four realms formed the first step into the construction process.

The contrasting of the four realms discussed the differences between the realities. The realms were contrasted according to 'moral-functional' factors designed originally by Beech. Table 6 summarises the contrasting. The moral factor varied, for example, from comprehensive caring to irrational despotic play. This contrasting clarifies the possible multiple moments of leadership.

In the next phase, the realms were divided into core constructs, which filled the space between the realms and formed the relatedness in this study. The core constructs consist of threads in which development, expression, professionalism, and behavioural elements are in interaction. In the four realms, experiencing of the core constructs vary. In the Anarchy realm the core constructs can be described in brief as: total lack of professionalism and development, dictatorial, arbitrary behaviour and random, irrational expression.

In the Quasi realm the aspects of professionalism are low, development issues refer to nominal acts, behaviour is an apparent play function, and expression is coincidental. In the Balance realm the core constructs refer to professionalism as high standard, to development as a normal function, to behaviour as correct, and to expression as open democratic acts. The Excellence realm represents high professionalism, taken for granted development, noble behaviour, and deep, model-like expression. Table 7 summarises the variation of the core constructs.

The last part of the analyses focused on reflecting the space between the realms. The idea of this part was somehow complicated but it had been circulating around throughout the research process. The space between the realms included a discourse of readjusting as part of the leadership construction process. With the help of textual quotations I could illustrate the experienced readjusting. In the relational orientation of this research, the role of readjusting is hence highlighted.

This study has been a 'journey' to the leadership phenomenon. It rose out of personal wondering and curiosity to explore and find more. The plans for this 'journey' weren't sealed beforehand, which I believe is typical for qualitative research. I decided to trust the scientific process itself. This process indicated its strengths and took me all the way. Working with the relational orientation has been comprehensive and thought-provoking. It has convinced me of the importance of understanding and reflecting the phenomena widely and diversely, among other things. Especially the inseparable relation between a phenomenon and context is intriguing. It has eye-opening power. Narrativity as a methodological choice and leadership as a research theme formed a

combination which showed its strengths epistemologically. Narrative knowing worked as a tool to interpret the textual material. As the object of this study has been to construct the leadership phenomenon, the narrative way of expressing offered a possibility to use a rich language register to illuminate the phenomenon.

The most encouraging thread throughout this study has been the idea of the multidimensionality of the phenomenon and the need for unfolding it. It originates from phenomenology. Phenomenology speaks about “sides,” the sides that are always there, but not necessarily recognised at the very moment. Ladkin (2010) refers metaphorically to a cube having six different sides which are not all seen at one glance.

Leadership as a phenomenon has “sides” as well. The same idea is expressed in short saying that “*there is always more than one possible reading of any organizational event or situation*” (Boje & al. 2004, p.572). In this study the reading is made in the follower context. This originates from the empirics, from the student essays, in which the narrators had clearly taken the follower position in order to write about leadership.

7.2. Contribution in leadership research

The foreword for relational leadership has been presented by philosophers some hundreds of years ago. For example, the basic thoughts of continental philosophy, phenomenology, underline the lived experiences, subjective knowing, cumulative effects of history in knowing (Ladkin, 2010). Philosopher Whitehead has stated that “*movement resides in the infinite flow of ‘mutual relatedness’ where mutuality is not a property common to individual terms but an ambiguous space that lies between terms and which resists resolution and identification*” (Whitehead in Cooper, 1998, p.5).

The relational view has crept little by little into leadership research. Dian-Marie Hosking, Mary Uhl-Bien, and Donna Ladkin have been perhaps the “strongest” pioneers who have fought against the tide of individually institutionalised leadership. Only in the nineties and the 21st century has it gained more interest among researchers. It needs more support in the form of scientific research.

With this research I wish to have contributed to legitimising leadership as a relational process instead of describing it as an individual-based issue. A huge amount of discussion, dialogue, and debating is needed in order to understand what buttons need to be pushed before relational understanding spreads more broadly to empirical leadership research and to practice.

Another contribution deals with the reconstructing process. In order to answer my research question – how leadership phenomena is constructed in narratives – I constructed four different realities coined here as realms of leadership. Through the idea of multiple realities, the audience is invited to

dialogue and discussion. In relational research, reconstructions are the ultimate goals of research (Hosking, 2011). They don't aim at claiming anything universal. Excellence, Balance, Quasi, and Anarchy are unique reconstructions in the context of my empirics and this study.

Perhaps the most surprising outcome of this study was working with the space between realms. It is a result of reading the source material over and over again in order to "see" more. In a similar kind of situation, Ladkin refers to the phenomenological term 'absences,' to those invisible contributors or forces enacting in relational moments.

She encourages researchers to "*interrogate the terrain below the surface level of apparent perceptions*" (Ladkin, 2010, p.53). This is what happened to me as well. The discourse of readjusting in the space between realms is an invisible thread linking the processes together. Leadership constructs in this study of four realms between which readjusting works as an invisible bridge. To my best understanding, readjusting has not been introduced as a contributor to leadership, largely in accordance with relational research traditions as it has a strong ongoing nature and frame.

The inspiration of this whole study has been the texts I have read and gathered about leadership. The methodological choice has been the qualitative narrative approach. In qualitative research the mainstream method of gathering empirics is organising interviews (Alvesson, 1996). In this study, exclusively written essays of adult students are used. This is not common in leadership research.

The value of written material lies in the writers' possibility to choose the "moment" when to write. Each and every essay has been written in the writers' own time, not in scheduled order or under the "pressure" of being part of a scientific research process. It has also been pointed out that the essays were not originally produced for research purposes. They were produced for a leadership course aimed at adult students in higher education.

Interestingly in some essays the writers indicated fear of talking about leadership and felt "safe" to write about it in their own peace. The power of this study has been in the textual form of the data and in the creative, artistic processing of texts with the narrative approach. It has a long tradition in the society but it hasn't restricted itself with too many obligations. The charm of the narrative approach lies in its enabling nature. The combination of rare, written source material and narrative processing is the contribution of this study in a methodological sense.

To sum up, a phenomenon like leadership never reaches an end. Leadership 'is going on' in all its local and global forms, understandings, and descriptions. Donna Ladkin writes an apt remark on this:

"(...) we can never know the totality of something which would constitute a definitive 'identity'. This is a key ontological assumption which underpins phenomenological investigation: that a 'thing's' identity

will always be beyond the reach of human apprehension" (Ladkin, 2010, p.24).

But a research must come to its end phase at some point.

7.3. Practical implications

"The stories we tell, like the questions we ask, are all finally about the value" (Cronon, in Riessman, 1993, p.69).

Reading through scores of studies I sometimes get a feeling that the last effort of the research report, the practical implications part is not considered too important. This may originate from methodological literature. In methodological literature, researchers are either warned not to act as radicals and to offer recommendations too early, too eagerly. This theme is often done over with in a couple sentences. This has certainly been a surprise to me.

In my opinion, this part represents valuable discussion involving the scientific world and practitioners in working life. This is the chance to communicate and translate ideas into action (Day, 2011 in Sage Handbook). To me this could also serve as an "innovative" part, where some novel practical ideas could be presented and offered for argumentation and critique.

First and foremost – and due to my background as a teacher – relational leadership and its process ontology mean lot of practically oriented discussions in the field of managerial education. The education field of leadership has been called "*the leadership industry*" (Kellerman, 2012, p.xix).

First of all, education has mainly been directed to people in leading positions. Secondly, the focus of education has been in developing their skills to use power over other organisational members. "*So leaders must learn how to form and mobilize others, how to negotiate and inspire (...) how to gain commitment to their own vision and projects*" (Hosking, 2007, p.255). This represents the functionalist view of leadership, focusing on individuals and in this case on leaders.

As it considers leadership a social construction and a relational process, the interpretative view calls for new insights in the educational sector (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). As the context and the moments become the centre of the relational processes of leadership, it seems that traditional leadership education is too much apart from the actual processes of leadership. Hosking (2006) suggests a more dialogical approach in the context where leadership is constructed. Hay and Hodgkinson also prefer process-relational approach in their study (Hay & Hodgkinson, 2006). In practice this would mean leadership as a social process needs to find a discussion arena in organisations and include all organisational members.

As I wrote in the beginning of this study, in the students' essays the overall picture of leadership was somehow secretive and some comments referred to the unspoken nature of leadership. Let's all ask ourselves; where and when do we discuss leadership issues? If your answer is 'in coffee tables,' that would indicate a lack of arenas for leadership discussion. So rather than leaders being only "equipped" outside the context, I would warmly welcome a constant arena of developing leadership in the context, in the very place where leadership is in action.

Throughout the research process, I have been unable to live down the challenge of followers going back and forth between different realms of leadership. It has bothered me ever since.

To promote the idea of "the arena of leadership," I would suggest taking a narrative form into consideration. As narratives are considered a natural way to understand and make sense, they could be considered in organisations as a "tool" (Polkinghorne, 1988). Watson proposes a so-called negotiated narrative approach to support managerial education. *"It involves management student and management academics bringing together their various experiences and observations (from practical experience or research work and working together, using where appropriate, academic concepts and theories, to draw out any possible 'story behind the stories' which can inform practices in managerial contexts"* (Watson, 2001, p.388). Applying this to a work context would perhaps bring us closer to a "discussion arena of leadership."

The realms, introducing the leadership processes and their elements, could work as basic starting points for leadership discussions in organisations. On the other hand, working with narratives is not habitual to our organisations and all the haste (Gabriel, 2000). Therefore I further suggest using Weick's words:

"To drop the tools of rationality is to gain access to lightness in the form of intuitions, feelings, stories, improvisation, experience, imagination, active listening, awareness in the moment, novel words and empathy. All these non-logical activities enable people to solve problems and enact their potential" (Weick, 2007, p.15).

Perhaps it is not even the haste which prevents us opening up the leadership arena for all. It has again to do with the individual understanding of leadership. As long as we take leadership discussions "personally", we are unable to move forward and develop the phenomenon in organisations.

7.4. Limitations of the study

"Each research is "plurivocal, open to several readings and to several constructions" (Rabino & Sulliva in Riessman, 1993, p.14).

Doing qualitative research in interpretative paradigm always opens up the discussion for multiple interpretations. This is also the case here. Another researcher would interpret the empirical material with different eyes. But on the other hand, this is the reason for discussions and debates and this is what science is mostly about. This is a richness of qualitative study. In this research the limitations concern first of all language.

The original essays were written in Finnish by adult students. The narratives, the four realms were written in English. In that process nuances may have changed or disappeared. This is of course not an ideal situation. The translation has been done as exact as possible. The originals and translations have been read many times during this research in order to minimise misunderstandings.

The data was gathered between 2006 and 2009 from adult student groups and the authors' permission was asked. The written essays were ready at hand when I seriously decided to engage myself in the research process. So the instructions or topic could not be formulated anymore and during my study I couldn't go back to the data and ask additional questions.

An interesting addition would have been deeper knowledge concerning the contexts of the experiences. This I also regard as a certain limitation. As noted in Chapter 5, written data is often used as a secondary source of data. In this study it had a primary role.

Narrative interpretation has its limitations as well. As an interpreter of the empirics, the researcher takes certain liberties when putting the data in a narrative form. Sometimes it is necessary to fill in gaps and sometimes you have to leave something out (Riessman, 2008).

Whether the four realms sound familiar and acceptable to the essayists themselves stays open at this point but this is where feedback is expected. I have already been asked many times by the students to "reveal" the outcome. I haven't had the possibility of presenting the results of the study to the students yet, which is in fact a pity. For the reason of transparency, the aim therefore has been to give room for original quotations in the analysis. In other words, the study represents the 'ontology of becoming' in this respect.

As this research highlights the importance of studying a phenomenon with diversity in mind, field work would have served as a valuable supplement to this research. Another important source could have been "the Saturday sessions" with the adult students, where we discussed and shared ideas about leadership. However, they have functioned as a strengthening basis for the ideas and thoughts throughout my research. They have certainly worked as a pre-phase of constructing my research.

7.5. Avenues for further research

First of all, in order to start a “new” chapter in leadership research it would be about time to seriously reconsider or at least speculate and discuss about the concepts of the thematic: leadership, leader, followership, follower. Crevani, Lindgren and Packendorff note in their article “Leadership, not Leaders” that they have made a deliberate risk by labelling their article and research “leadership” because of the pervasive history of leadership as a leader-centric phenomenon. (Crevani & al., 2010). Bligh also suggests a strong semantic discussion around the concepts like leader, follower, leadership and followership for further actions in the research arena (Bligh, 2011).

Rost highlights the inconsistency of the concepts of postindustrial understanding of leadership. They carry the “baggage” of the Industrial Zeitgeist (Rost, 2008). The mainstream of leadership research has labelled leadership equal to a leader. Interestingly, Parker-Follet was wondering some seventy years ago, whether she should give up with the word leader “*since to so many it suggests merely the leader-follower relation*” (Parker-Follet, 1941, 291).

We need new concepts to describe the “new” way of understanding leadership as a socially constructed relational phenomenon. One could speculate if using the word “*leadship*” instead of leadership would work. That would at least navigate us away from the leader connotation.

Follower as an old fashioned and “lowering” concept has been discussed in Chapter 1. It seems that we are working in the 21st century with tools from the “iron age.” There is a will but the courage is lacking – also in this research. Perhaps the most convenient way would be to change only a “little bit” and follow Gandhi’s thoughts of the word follower and fellow.

“Let no one say that he is a follower of Gandhi. It is enough that I should be my own follower. I know what an inadequate follower I am of myself, for I cannot live up to the convictions I stand for. You are not followers but fellow students, fellow pilgrims, fellow seekers, fellow workers” (Gandhi in Bligh, 2011, p.425).

The connotation of ‘fellow’ would recall the original meaning of the follower as an assisting helper of the leader (see Chapter 1). These are just examples, but the 21st century researchers deserve at least serious discussion instead of mere subordinate clauses about the terminology. A conceptual reconsidering “summit” could clarify the distinction between leader-centric and relational leadership discussion to start with.

Secondly, as mentioned many times during this study, relational understanding and research on leadership has just begun to intrigue researchers. I would warmly welcome any research avenues aiming at describing the everyday of leadership using the relational approach or critical

management approaches. This calls, however, for methodological choices like ethnography; in-depth fieldwork where the researcher takes part in the everyday observing or taking part in it personally. *“This type of ‘mise en scène’ implies the deployment of a qualitative, interpretative and ethnographic research strategy, with a strong ‘situational’ focus”* (Wood, 2005, p.25).

In fact, any methodological creativity in leadership research on the whole would be interesting. One example is Salovaara’s dissertation, in which he has used a so-called field path method. *“(…) field path method urges us to leave ready-made definitions, concepts and habitual thinking behind us, to be guided by the phenomena, listen to the language and to think a new”* (Salovaara, 2011, p.54).

Good examples of research on the relational avenue are Crevani, Lindgren and Packendorff’s research on leadership as practices and interaction. They highlight, among other things, the understanding of everyday as different situational practices and interactions in three different types of organisations. The focus is in very mundane activities. As a methodology they have so far used participant observation in situational context (Crevani & al., 2010).

Something “new and exciting” is also presented in critical leadership studies. Alvesson and Spicer suggest that social constructionist paradigmatic leadership research, which this research represents, lacks among other things the challenging of respondents’ views and takes them as presented. They have worked on developing a critical performativity approach which suggests taking the many “sides” of leadership (leaders, followers, clients, stakeholders, etc.) seriously, but offering a view of critical hesitance accepting the views of the respondents (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Their standpoint differs from the traditional view of critical leadership research and offers an eye-opening, novel avenue for leadership researchers.

If I had the possibility to continue this research journey, I would probably pop up in those coffee tables and start sensing the situational everyday constructing the leadership phenomenon with more ethnographic methods, including participatory elements like shadowing, diary studies, and participating (Czarniawska, 2008). In particular, I have become more and more interested in gathering so called “naturally occurring data”. This term originates from David Silverman, who refers to data gathered unnoticed without the intervention of the researcher or ready-made settings for research purposes (Silverman, 2005). Its appealing nature is summed up as *“(…) the beauty of naturally occurring data is that it may show us things we could never imagine”* (Silverman, 2005, p.120).

When having my Saturday lessons a few years ago, I had a chance to be part of a very sensitive moment that scared me to some degree. Perhaps I had not found enough realms to construct leadership. I have chosen it as my post scriptum and final words.

7.6. Post scriptum

In the first pages of this research I quote artist Kirsti Neuvonen: *“From the valley we see big things. From the peak only small.”* Inspired by this quote I wanted to somehow apply this idea in my research. I soon realised that leadership as a complex, invisible, untouchable, and very transient phenomenon must be reviewed from different angles and sides in multiple ways and even then we are taken up a phenomenon which is an endless mysterious state of mind. It has been quite a *“fencing of thoughts”* (Määttä, 2009, p.20). Perhaps complexity has to do with simplicity as the following incident reveals. Perhaps we could explain the relatedness or the space between of things by the following:

In 2006 I was having one of my Saturday sessions for my adult students about leadership. We were discussing the complexity of the thematic and I asked the students a few questions. “How would you describe leadership? What does it mean to you?” We had the most interesting discussion and suddenly one lady raised her hand and said:

“For me leadership is the light in my leader’s room. I don’t know if there is anybody in there. The light is enough”

This might also concretise Ladkin’s idea of leadership as the “space between,” or the “fifth” realm of the ghosts. (Auvinen, 2012).

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Appendix 1

A= Anarchy realm			B = Balance realm		
Q = Quasi realm			E = Excellence realm		
Essay Nr.	Realm changes				
1	E	A	A	B	
2	B	Q	E		
3	Q	A	Q		
4	B	Q	E		
5	B	Q			
6	E	Q	A	Q	
7	A	Q			
8	Q	Q	A	Q	
9	A	B			
10	B	Q	A		
11	A				
12	B	A			
13	A	Q	Q	E	A
14	Q				
15	B	Q	Q		
16	Q				
17	Q	Q			
18	B	Q			
19	A	B			
20	Q	Q			
21	E	Q			
22	Q	Q			
23	Q	B			
24	Q	B			
25	Q				
26	Q				
27	Q	Q	E		
28	Q	E	A	Q	B
29	Q	B			

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